Socrates
and
The Sophists

Plato's Protagoras, Euthydemus,
Hippias Major and Cratylus

Translation and Introductory Essay by
Joe Sachs

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Joe Sachs
St. John's College, Annapolis

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Cover illustration © David Graves, www.davidgraves.cc. Depicts Protagoras in an uncharacteristic pause for thought, occasioned by his encounter with Socrates.

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INTRODUCTION

Our word "sophist" comes from the Greek *sophistês*, which should, from its structure and parts alone, refer to someone distinguished for wisdom, and it appears to have started out with just that meaning. Its earliest uses noted in the standard lexicon are applied to poets and musicians of unusual skill and political leaders outstanding for their sagacity. By the time Plato was writing, though, the word could no longer be assumed to convey anything positive. Anytus, a politician who makes a brief appearance in the *Meno*, knows sophists only by reputation, but considers them a public disgrace (91C, 92B), and a slave who opens a door in the *Protagoras*, and who has first-hand experience of three of them, greets the arrival of two more presumed members of that species with a noise of disgust (314D). In Aristophanes' play the *Clouds*, they are caricatured as buffoons who worship nebulous new deities, profess to know absurd and useless things, and teach the young disrespect for their elders. That caricature is embodied in the person of Socrates, but in the *Protagoras* (312A) Socrates himself asks a young man if he wouldn't be ashamed to end up called a sophist, and the sheepish reply is accompanied by a blush. It did not take long for those who had staked a claim to the name of sophist to turn a word originally intended to confer honor into a reproach, at least among many of their contemporaries, and at least in Athens. There are two ways to look at this decline in reputation. It may be simply a matter of fact that the people who became associated with the name of sophists did not do credit to it. Or it may be that there is something inherently disturbing in the original notion behind the name.

If we think of the sophist as a professional at the business of being wise, someone who turns his reputation for wisdom into a source of income, it will not be surprising if doubts about his motives begin to arise. More questionable than that, though, is the very possibility of making a specialty out of wisdom, whatever one's reasons for doing so might be. There was an American comedian who called himself Professor Irwin Corey, "the world's leading authority," to get a laugh before he even walked onto the stage. Mastery of

any skill or subject matter depends upon an application of effort that would seem to require the sacrifice of other accomplishments, and those who have mastered them, and hire out their services to train others, can be judged by visible results. Those who hired the sophists to teach their children must have been looking for something more than specialized knowledge and specialized skills; they must have been looking for an education. Deciding whether or not to pursue any particular specialty, and understanding how to put one to use, would seem to depend on a deeper kind of learning, one that aims at the whole development of a human being. If, in place of or in addition to specialized learning, the sophists claimed to provide learning of this universal kind, then the one result they were promising was to make their students better people. And the same relation the word for education (*paideia*) had to the particular kinds of learning, the word "virtue" (*aretê*) had to the particular merits a human being might have. Hence the question that happens to be on the tip of Meno's tongue in the dialogue named for him, which pops out of his mouth before he even says hello to Socrates, became a standard topic of discussion: can virtue be taught? And assuming it can, is the virtue of their children and citizens something that parents and cities should turn over to outside experts?

The innocent-appearing word that associated someone with wisdom, then, turns out to open up the practical matter of how people should be educated and how their lives should be lived. When anything having to do with sophists comes up in Plato's dialogues, that is the direction in which Socrates turns the conversation. So one might imagine that a dialogue called the *Sophist* would address those concerns directly and extensively, but one would be mistaken. In that dialogue it is Socrates who brings up the question of what a sophist is, but he is a silent listener to the discussion that ensues, and that discussion ends up inquiring not into practical matters of life and happiness, but into ultimate theoretical questions about the way the world is constituted. A series of attempts to define the sophist leads to a need to justify the possibility of speaking and thinking falsely, and then in turn to understand how there can be images of things that are. The participants in the discussion are a visiting philosopher from the home of Parmenides and a young Athenian with a gift for mathematics, and their conversation leaves the concerns of sophists and those who hire them far behind. To get a first-hand look at sophists in Plato's dialogues and to see what Socrates makes of them, one must turn from the *Sophist* to other texts. In the *Protagoras*, the *Euthydemus*, and the *Hippias Major*, sophists of various kinds are on display, and they have to back up the things they say in discussion with Socrates. And in the *Cratylus*, the question of whether names are natural or conventional is framed by Socrates against a backdrop of the beliefs of two prominent sophists, as though an investigation of naming might provide a test of some kind for those beliefs; and by singling out and linking those beliefs, the *Cratylus* may indirectly shed light on the general question of what a sophist is.

The discussion in the *Sophist* runs into two problems in attempting to take on that question in its generality. What the sophist does is shrouded in

darkness (254A), and what he is presents a variety of shifting or conflicting appearances (223C). Those appearances lead to seven definitions in the *Sophist*, but the dialogues in which sophists are put before us recapture the primary evidence on which the definitions are based. It is one thing to hear sophists called competitive athletes in contests of words, but nothing makes that so vivid as the portrayal in the *Euthydemus* of a man who specializes in quick victories in such contests, and who works in combination with his brother to block an opponent at every turn. And those definitions that take the sophist to be first and foremost a businessman become concrete when one hears Hippias, in the *Hippias Major*, describe the way he can tailor his product to any market, even in a city so resistant to outside influences on its citizens as Sparta, and earn big fees even in small towns. And the reasons Protagoras became the most prominent sophist of all can be appreciated from reading the dialogue that bears his name, in which he has brought his star power to Athens as a lure to ensnare the sons of the rich. Hippias and another sophist, Prodicus, make cameo appearances in the *Protagoras* as well, and the portrait of the three of them gathered in one house is so vibrant that one is surprised, afterward, to realize that there haven't been more than three on view. It is common for people to describe their gathering as a convention, and it has the feel of something like a traveling circus, as the three men come to sight discoursing while walking, sitting, and lying down, to listeners who follow in procession, sit in orderly array, or lie in bed themselves, in one case with youthful company. Our imaginations are transported in these dialogues into the world the sophists occupied, and we see them active in their native habitat. These depictions of the sophists lack the serious tone that accompanies the search for a definition in the *Sophist*, and the comic element in them is so strong that it may lead some to regard them as not serious at all. But a playful tone is not incompatible with a serious purpose. In the Sixth Letter attributed to Plato, there is a reference (323D) to a "seriousness that is the sister of play," and that phrase captures something deeply characteristic of the dialogues. When Socrates is participating, the most serious of discussions are often born together with lighthearted banter, playful comparisons, or incongruous examples.

I suggest, then, that even if you read these dialogues only for the laughs, you may find that initial pleasure giving way to enjoyments of a deeper kind. The notion that Plato would have made fun of sophists as an end in itself has little plausibility to begin with, and it is not an impression that can survive an active reading. And one particular surprising result that got me interested in taking a closer look at these dialogues is the presence in them all of a tantalizing topic that occasionally pops up in Plato's writings. In the *Phaedo* (96E-97B), for instance, Socrates claims to be puzzled about how it is that one plus one is two. In the *Theaetetus* (185B), he pauses to call attention to the fact that sound and color are each one thing, but if you count up both together they are two. In the *Republic* (524B), he makes the same point about large and small. These comments of Socrates are left as loose ends in those dialogues, never picked up and pursued. He seems to find it remarkable that we can count to two, unless he is just playing with us. But he may be inviting

us to play with an idea, and his playfulness and ours may have a sister. There had been an old problem about the one and the many, at least since the time of Parmenides, that challenged anyone who wanted to engage in philosophy to explain how there can be many things at all, rather than just one. (See, for example, Plato's *Parmenides*, 135C-136C, and Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 1088b 35-1089a 6.) That problem, as a problem, would clearly be solved if one could justify counting up to two. But in doing so, one could not assume that there were two things already present to be counted. The Parmenidean challenge requires an account of the generation of duality out of unity, or in non-temporal language, an account of what it is for anything to *be* that inevitably includes a basis for duality as well as unity. I submit that this is not just a "problem" to be solved but a serious question, and one that is unlikely ever to be felt as a question unless one is willing to be playful about a fact that seems obvious. Problems exist in books, but a question can exist only in a human being who feels reason to embark on a quest. And a question as odd as how to count to two is unlikely to get started as anything but play.

Philosophy in Plato's dialogues is always intertwined with play. Socrates explicitly says in the *Republic* (536C-537C) that this is the appropriate way to begin a philosophic education. Now it may seem that the farthest extreme from philosophic playfulness is scholarly research, aimed not at opening living thinking to all possibilities but at ascertaining what someone else thought in the past. But a scholar who wants to understand what Plato thought needs to have enough imagination and flexibility in his own thinking to recognize the ways Plato wrote, and enough delicacy of judgment and depth of intelligence to give them their due. One such scholar was Jacob Klein. It was from the introduction to his *A Commentary on Plato's Meno* (University of North Carolina Press, 1965, p. 18) that I learned that Plato had called play and seriousness sisters. And it was from Klein's most scholarly work, *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra* (M.I.T. Press, 1968, pp. 79-99), that I learned about certain matters that Plato taught the students in his Academy, but never made a direct topic of discussion in his dialogues. The primary source of information about these matters is Plato's student Aristotle, himself rarely considered a playful soul. Aristotle makes mention in the *Physics* (209b 14-15) of things Plato said as unwritten teachings, and in many passages in Books I, XIII, and XIV of the *Metaphysics* he describes the primary content of those teachings as the proposal that there are eidetic numbers. Both words of that phrase need some explanation, and my own understanding of them depends entirely on what I learned from Klein.

Aristotle points out that there is a difference between the numbers that are counted and the numbers by which we count (*Physics* 219b 5-7). The primary meaning of the word *arithmos* was not the latter but the former: a dozen eggs or four horses were themselves numbers, numbers *of* perceptible things. The numbers twelve and four as mathematics deals with them are *arithmoi* as well, numbers of something, but in their case numbers of identical thinkable things, mere units assumed to be indivisible, and with no other characteristics except countability. Eidetic numbers would be a third kind, not perceptible with the

bodily senses but not undifferentiated items of thought either; they would be collections of *eidê*, intelligible things with differentiated content. Anyone who has become acquainted with Plato through the generally available textbooks, lectures, or commentaries has probably heard of the "theory of forms." The word "form" translates *eidos*, and many dialogues introduce the notion that when we call many perceptible things by a single name, we have our eyes on some invisible, intelligible look or form. An example may be found in this book, at 389A-B of the *Cratylus*, where it is said that a carpenter who makes a shuttle is looking to an invisible model embodying the purposes of a weaver. That is not a theory. It is a dialectical beginning. In the *Parmenides*, the old philosopher for whom that dialogue is named argues at length (130A-135C) that the conception of forms is full of contradictions and impossible consequences, but concludes that it is still necessary to grant that there are such things in order to allow thinking to have content and conversation to have power. That is the status of forms in all the dialogues: a provisional opinion granted by the participants to allow philosophic conversation to begin. In the divided line passage at the end of Book VI of the *Republic*, Socrates elaborates one of the implications of that opinion, that everything we think about or perceive would be an image of an intelligible model in the same way reflections in water are images of visible things. That too is not a theory; it is an invitation to allow the free play of imagination in philosophic discussion with the confidence that there will always be a path from our thinking about images to the way things are. The adoption of a belief in forms in the dialogues is always in the spirit of Socrates, who does not claim to have knowledge or presume to propound theories, but does fight in word and deed (as he says at 86B-C of the *Meno*) for his commitment to the ultimate intelligibility of all things, and the beneficial effects of inquiring. Still, there is undeniable evidence that there *was* a Platonic theory of forms, taught by him in his school, never committed by him to writing, and that it proposed that the forms are numbers.

On first hearing, that claim may seem bizarre, or even alarming, but the general lines of the theory, as reconstructed by Klein, are sufficiently sober to reassure the most cautious hearers. In fact, the proposal of eidetic numbers is intended as a way of introducing rigor for the first time into discussion of the first principles of philosophy. It is a response to the conflicting parties who had determined the two poles around which all Greek philosophy prior to the time of Socrates turned, described by Socrates in the *Theaetetus* (180E-181B) as those who made the whole stand still and those who set in motion what was immovable. The principal spokesmen for these parties were Parmenides and Heracleitus. But the Eleatic Stranger in Plato's *Sophist* accuses both sides of that debate of speaking superficially, as though they were talking to children (242C-244A), and goes on to recast their dispute as the question whether motion, rest, and being are one, two, or three things. Parmenides had said that the answer is one, since being alone is and the All is motionless. Heracleitus in an opposite way had made everything indistinguishably one by saying everything is in flux. A grammarian or logician who hears three words and distinguishes three meanings would presumably say the answer is three. But

Plato's response, as read by Klein with the help of Aristotle, is that the answer has to be two. The hypothesis that permits that answer to be given is that the highest kinds are not classes but intelligible structures built like numbers. The way we use language tempts us to say that if motion is something and rest is something, so that *both* of them *are*, then being is a common element in motion and rest, and *each* of them is. It would follow that being is the comprehensive class that includes the two sub-classes of motion and rest. If, however, being is understood as the eidetic number two, then it is not a common property shared by motion and rest, but a whole of which motion and rest are parts. Following this hypothesis, rather than our unreflecting ways of speaking, leads to the conclusion that motion cannot be anything at all except in combination with rest, and rest cannot be anything at all except in combination with motion. Motion and rest, then, can be separated in speech as universal classes, but as an *eidos*, as the intelligible look of something capable of being, each must be conceived as necessarily including the other. And if an adequate conception of motion always already includes rest, and an adequate conception of rest always already includes motion, and being is inconceivable apart from motion or rest, we have found an ultimate justification in the nature of things for counting up to two.

Once the structure of the eidetic number two has been grasped, one can ask whether there are grounds for believing in it as true. One support for it may be found in the *Theaetetus*, beginning at 181B, where Socrates argues persuasively that, within any kind of motion or change we think of, we necessarily and simultaneously presuppose the presence of rest in order for there to be anything moving or changing, or for the motion or change to be identifiable at all. This seems to me to be one of those rare philosophic arguments for which there is no credible counter-argument. The corresponding argument that rest presupposes motion is more difficult to grasp. It is made by the Eleatic Stranger at 248E-249B of the *Sophist*. I take the force of it to be that anything conceived of as at rest in itself is thereby assumed also to be detached from itself and present to the one conceiving it. If the act of thinking involves motion, and the content of that thinking remains intact as an image of a stable being, then that being is not only at rest but is also the source of a motion; a being wholly divorced from motion would be literally inconceivable. If both these arguments are sound, then motion and rest are inseparable notions, but it remains to be asked whether being is some third notion separate from them. I am aware of an argument, made by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics*, at 998b 22-27 and again at 1059b 32-36, that being cannot be regarded as a general class including all the things there are. His grounds for that conclusion are intricate matters of logic: a general class has to be differentiated into sub-classes by the presence and absence of characteristics outside that general class, but by assumption there is no class outside being. Hence, the relation of being to kinds of beings cannot be that of genus to species. These brief allusions to three philosophic arguments may be sufficient to indicate that positing that being consists of motion and rest both together is neither inconsequential nor frivolous, and that theorizing about eidetic numbers was not a form of number mysticism

or mystification of any kind. What philosophy meant in the writings of Parmenides, Heracleitus, Plato, and Aristotle was the same thing it meant within Plato's academy, and the unwritten teachings about eidetic numbers offered there had the same concerns and the same stature.

This lengthy digression on eidetic numbers was undertaken, however, not to see what they have to do with philosophy but what they have to do with sophistry. For the fact is that each of the four dialogues collected here to provide a close look at the sophists makes some emphatic contribution to the topic of eidetic numbers. In the *Hippias Major*, Socrates explains at length (300A-303D) that one cannot assume that each of two things has whatever attributes both of them have, since Hippias and Socrates, together, are two, but Hippias himself is not therefore two. Jacob Klein takes this passage as the point of departure for his discussion. In the *Cratylus*, Socrates makes a similar point (432A-433A) by saying that an image is not like a number; an image must lack some of the attributes of its original, or it would cease to be an image and be another original, while a number cannot have any part missing without ceasing to be what it is. Cratylus makes a mistake by assuming that images must have a structure like that of numbers, while Hippias makes a different mistake by neglecting to consider that some non-mathematical things do have that structure. In the *Euthydemus*, we encounter what amounts to a two-headed sophist, Euthydemus and his brother, who work as a team, and Socrates makes sure we cannot miss their inseparable duality by referring to the pair of them almost always with pronouns and verbs not in the plural but in dual forms. This was an obsolete grammatical feature of the Greek language that was already infrequent in Homer's poems, and was very rarely used in Plato's time. The two or three occurrences of the dual in the *Hippias Major* and the *Cratylus* would be typical in the dialogues, and the more than half-dozen separate places where duals appear in the *Protagoras* are exceptionally many. But in the *Euthydemus*, I estimate that the number of words in the dual may exceed one hundred. Inseparable duality has an overpowering presence in that dialogue without ever being mentioned. And in the *Protagoras* there is an indirect suggestion that virtue might be understood as having the structure of an eidetic number, but in this case the number is five. There are two stretches of that dialogue in which Protagoras is prevailed upon to answer questions asked by Socrates (328E-334C and 349B-360E), and in both Socrates asks him about the relation of the virtues to one another. The two men assume that five cardinal virtues are necessary and sufficient to human happiness, and that these are wisdom, courage, moderation, justice, and piety. What Socrates asks is whether these five virtues taken together would be some one thing (*hen ti eiê sullêbdên*), and if so, whether they would be one like pieces of gold or like parts of a face (329C-D). But Protagoras is unwilling to follow any line of questioning to a conclusion, and the matter is left unresolved.

So in one dialogue, one sophist, Protagoras, toys with an opinion that may involve an eidetic-number structure; in another dialogue, a pair of sophists, Euthydemus and his brother, are playfully linked by a grammatical form that makes them an image of such a structure; and in a third dialogue, another

sophist, Hippias, comically fails to grasp a logical point that is a consequence of that structure. Clearly these facts alone establish no connection between the nature of a sophist and the theory involving eidetic numbers. But this repeated playful joining of two ideas does establish an invitation to further play. And a look at the fourth dialogue included here allows a further connection with sophists to emerge. The *Cratylus* is a discussion of whether there is anything natural, rather than merely conventional, in names. Socrates starts that discussion off with the prior question of whether there is truth and falsity in speech (385B), and then pushes that question back a step to ask whether there is any stability in the beings themselves that are named in speech. We have seen a version of that question in the *Sophist*, set against the teachings of the two philosophers Parmenides and Heracleitus. But in the *Cratylus*, the two philosophers appear to be replaced by the two sophists Protagoras and Euthydemus. Instead of invoking the opposing claims that the whole of things is at rest or in motion, Socrates singles out Protagoras's saying that a human being is the measure of all things, and Euthydemus's assumption that all attributes always belong to all things alike at the same time. It is as though the dialogue that aims at saying what a sophist is has to steer a course between the boundaries of philosophy, while the dialogue that aims at discovering what names are must make its way between the boundaries of sophistry. In the *Sophist*, the Eleatic Stranger sought to find the sophist by dividing up the whole domain of artful activity, but the approach of Socrates in the *Cratylus* orients the discussion there by singling out two beliefs that may be meant to define directly the borders of the territory the sophists inhabit. If that suggestion has any merit, the opposition Socrates sets up between Protagoras and Euthydemus could give us a framework for putting together the portraits of the various sophists into one coherent picture of sophistry.

But the two pillars of sophistry are not so straightforward or so obviously a pair as are the philosophic claims that everything is in motion and everything is at rest. Part of the appeal of Protagoras's saying is that it has an impressive sound without much precision. In the *Cratylus* passage we are considering, Socrates interprets it to mean that the only standard of what is or is not, and of the way things are, is appearance. It follows that if things appear differently to two human beings, neither appearance has any greater claim to truth than the other. But such differences of opinion are not inescapable, because appearances can shift, and may shift one party into agreement with another. Twice in the *Protagoras*, Protagoras brings the crowd of onlookers into resounding endorsements of his own opinions by displays that give the impression of settling an issue. It is not his long speech about virtue (320C-328D), in which he claims to combine a story and an argument (324D), that has this effect, but two shorter sudden bursts of speech. The first occurs after Socrates has been questioning Protagoras for some time to clarify the relations among the virtues, and Protagoras has been objecting that the questions are simple-minded (331B-C) and in poor taste (333D). Finally, armed and ready and spoiling for a fight, Protagoras takes control of the conversation and dismisses its subject matter with a brief outburst of ridicule. Protagoras is left looking powerful

and knowledgeable, that impression spreads over his opinions, and the crowd applauds him for speaking well (334C). Socrates claims to have a poor memory, and says he has forgotten what Protagoras was talking about. The crowd, without realizing it, has forgotten it too, because the content of the discussion has vanished in the dazzle of the display. Protagoras himself admits in so many words that if he confined himself to answering questions, he could never succeed in his aim, which is to make himself appear better than someone else (335A). The second time he wins applause (339D-E), he scores a double knockout; having set up the topic himself, he manages to appear superior to Socrates and to the respected poet Simonides at one blow. "A human being is the measure of all things" sounds like a principle that reduces us all to one level, but adopting it also has the paradoxical effect of letting one man make the rest of think that he is the only one above the common level.

The Protagorean standard of the way things are, then, is appearance, and Socrates sets it up in the *Cratylus* as one of the two pillars of sophistry. He assigns the second to Euthydemus, and states it as the principle that all attributes always belong to all things alike at the same time. We have likened this pairing to that of the two philosophers Heracleitus and Parmenides in the *Sophist*. And in the *Theaetetus* (152E), Socrates also associates Protagoras with Heracleitus's claim that everything is in motion. By this purely schematic set of correspondences, one might expect to find some association between Euthydemus and Parmenides, and oddly enough, it is there to be found. At the very end of the dialogue called the *Parmenides* (166C), Parmenides himself sums up a long series of logical deductions with the conclusion, "therefore, as it seems, whether the one is or is not, it and the other things, in relation both to themselves and to one another, all are and are not in every way, and appear and do not appear in every way." Now in the *Theaetetus* (183E), Socrates claims to hold Parmenides in such high regard that he will not presume to examine the things he said, while in the *Euthydemus* (278B-C), Socrates compares Euthydemus's childish logical tactics to pulling a chair out from under someone who is beginning to sit down. But if seriousness and play are sisters, there may be only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and in their different ways and for their different reasons Parmenides and Euthydemus do adopt similar procedures of arguing. In the *Parmenides* (136B-C), Parmenides describes the massive piece of reasoning that will lead to his conclusion in this way: "whatever it is about which you make the hypothesis, on every occasion, that it is and that it is not, and that it has any other attribute whatever, it is necessary to examine what follows in relation to it, and in relation to each one of the other things whatsoever that you select, and in relation to the greater number of them, and in relation to all of them together, all alike." The version of this procedure that we witness in the *Euthydemus* is highly streamlined. Euthydemus's brother Dionysodorus whispers this description of it to Socrates (275E, 276E): "I can tell you for sure in advance, Socrates, that whichever way the young fellow answers, he'll be refuted…Everything we ask is like that, Socrates: there's no way out." Euthydemus has asked an

unsuspecting victim an either/or question, and quickly deduced the opposite conclusion, to the humiliation of the answerer and the delight of the crowd of onlookers, and that result was not dependent on which answer the victim chose. In the full-blown version of their technique, as soon as the answerer has been refuted, the questioner's brother catches up the argument like a ball (277B) and hurls it back at the victim from the opposite direction, refuting the opposite answer.

Parmenides recommends his procedure as a preparation for philosophy, a logical discipline for the sake of comprehensiveness and mastery in the pursuit of truth (136C). Euthydemus too promises that his procedure prepares the way for philosophy (275A), but what we witness in the *Euthydemus* makes that claim laughable. The young man Ctessipus, who Socrates says has a good and beautiful nature marred only by the rudeness of youth (273A), is provoked by their tactics, but only into rivalry and sarcasm, culminating at 298D-300A. And an unnamed adult in the crowd, who is already a prominent man in Athens, and whom Socrates takes to be someone on the borders of philosophy, reports to Socrates' friend Crito that the spectacle Euthydemus and his brother put on convinced him that philosophy is worthless (304D-305E). Of those who witness their display, only Socrates persists in claiming that there is something worth learning from the pair, and he seems to mean that there is philosophic benefit to be had from testing what they do in order to find out exactly where they go wrong and what it is that they are corrupting (307B-C). Socrates' formulation in the *Cratylus* about the underlying assumption of Euthydemus's procedure seems to be the end result of a reflection of just that kind. In the same way that Protagoras makes appearance the only standard of the way things are, Euthydemus takes the only standard to be logical consequence. We can restate Socrates' formulation of Euthydemus's belief, that all attributes belong to all things alike always and at the same time, in language more familiar to us since Aristotle's time, as the principle that all predicates alike belong to all subjects through some middle term or series of middle terms. We might be tempted to say that the brothers' technique is to shift the meaning of terms between the two premises of an argument, but Socrates interprets it differently. He eventually allows Euthydemus to have his way in claiming that it doesn't matter what the answerer thinks a word means (295C), because earlier he had drawn the admission from Dionysodorus that the questioner is not saying anything that seems true to him anyway, but only arguing for the sake of argument (286D). Meanings don't shift within arguments, on this view; the arguments themselves just stand side-by-side in pairs that take those meanings in different senses, yielding opposite conclusions, all together, all at once. At one extreme, then, the temporal flux of appearances reduces all opinions to one level on which Protagoras can make anything believable. At the opposite extreme, the timeless indifference of logical combinations allows Euthydemus and his brother to make any proposition the conclusion of a demonstration. The two pillars of sophistry are appearance and logical consequence.

So we may tentatively conclude that, whereas philosophy is stuck at an impasse when motion and rest are isolated from each other, and becomes

possible when they are put together, sophistry is able to thrive when the motion of appearances and the stability of logical connections are severed from one another. Throughout the *Protagoras*, Protagoras resists all efforts to make him answer questions that would draw out the meaning of the things he says through elementary logical connections. And throughout the *Euthydemus*, Euthydemus and his brother refuse to take a look at conflicting logical connections they have made and say which way seems right to them. On one such occasion (287B), Dionysodorus protests that if Socrates is going to rake up what they said at first, then next he'll be dredging up what they said last year. For the Euthydemus/Dionysodorus brand of sophistry, conclusions just accumulate without limit, each serving its purpose and none required to be tested and judged against its opposite. The conclusions accumulated in Parmenides' logical exercise were meant to be means to an end, stepping stones on a disciplined approach to philosophy aimed at discovering truth. Euthydemus and Dionysodorus leave their conclusions in an anarchic heap as they race nonstop from punchline to punchline. If the scene set in the *Protagoras* resembled a traveling circus, with sophists in their varying postures surrounded by their three rings of admirers, it was at least a sedate exhibition. The spectacle in the *Euthydemus* is more like a vaudeville routine, a double act of the zany variety, with rapid-fire delivery in the style of Groucho and Chico Marx. But whatever the pace, all sophistry is alike in making sure that thinking never coheres: whether it is the flux of appearance or the infinitude of logical connections, the ruling principle of each brand of sophistry makes it impossible to get a foothold toward a more secure opinion. Dionysodorus gloats that there is no way out of the traps he and his brother set, and this means that there is also no way forward on their terms; their arguments are stuck in one place, as Socrates points out (288A). The pattern we have been considering in interpreting these dialogues suggests, though, that the way out of the traps set by sophists of one type *and* out of the flux of appearances exploited by those of the other type may be as simple as putting their opposite principles together. Our model was the proposal that only motion and rest together make intelligible what it is for anything to *be*. If the allusions to the eidetic-number structure in the dialogues we are looking at are meant to suggest that it is applicable here as well, it may be that we are being invited to consider the two branches of sophistry as containing the remedies for the defects of one another.

What would a standard of the way things are look like if it combined appearance and logical consequence together in one whole? Would it not look exactly like what we see in every Platonic dialogue when Socrates leads a discussion? Socratic dialectic always begins with asking someone whether it seems to him that something is the case. It always proceeds by asking that person simple questions that draw out consequences of his opinion and assumptions upon which it rests. And it always leads to some conclusion that prompts Socrates to ask the other person whether things now seem any different to him. Often this takes the form of noticing that two inconsistent conclusions have turned up, and asking which of them seems right. In the course

of Socratic dialectic, appearances are always submitted to the test of logical consequences, and those logical consequences are always re-submitted to the test of appearance. Sophistry thrives on an insistence that one or the other of these criteria be used to the exclusion of the other. But to determine whether what appears to be the case makes sense, the natural thing to do is to ask, but wouldn't that mean that this other thing would follow? And when paradoxical or inconsistent conclusions have been drawn, the natural way to ask whether they make any sense is to say, which way seems right to you now? Socrates does not demand, like Parmenides, that all philosophic questions be deferred until a long discipline of logical exploration has been undertaken. He draws the people he talks with, and us along with them, directly into philosophic activity in which we are required to articulate the way things appear to us to begin with, and then to do so again after following some stretch of logical consequences. The questions that start these discussions are almost never resolved in these discussions, but they are deepened, and possible answers to them are clarified. That is forward motion, not swept along with shifting appearances and not boxed in by logical dead ends, and it is achieved by allowing logical consequences into the appearances, and appearances into those logical consequences. Protagoras is like a politician who sidesteps all questions, and Euthydemus and Dionysodorus are like lawyers who keep saying "just answer the questions and keep your opinions to yourself." Their tactics are two ways for someone to maintain control over other people. Socrates insists on bringing up questions, and won't allow another person to keep his opinions to himself, and his way of going about things seems to allow a line of questioning to take on a life of its own.

We have noted the fact that Socrates refers to Euthydemus and his brother in the dual so often that this becomes a dominant feature of that dialogue. The pairing is first of all surely a reference to the way they work in tandem to block any escape from their arguments (297B-D). But we have seen that the arguments themselves come in pairs, and though there is something apt about the way the brothers bat them back and forth, there is really no need for more than one sophist to voice them. The deeper duality is that which pairs every statement that something is the case or has some attribute with a counter-statement that it is not or does not. The sophist can always find a middle term for the statement and for the counter-statement as well, and construct proofs of both. This may simply connect each with something different, but frequently it involves taking the same word in one sense to get one conclusion and in a different sense to get the opposite conclusion. So if Socrates is allowed to have his way, someone will have to say which way he is understanding the word, or which conclusion seems more right to him, and the discussion will have a way to move forward. This alone defeats the purposes of the sophist, and gets philosophic inquiry underway. But there seems to be something more going on in the overwhelming use of the dual in the language of the *Euthydemus*. And an equally odd fact about the dialogue is the way Socrates insists from beginning to end (272B, 304B) that he wants to study with these sophists. If the use of the dual is intended as a reference to the eidetic-number hypothesis,

and if there is an underlying seriousness to Socrates' playful claim that there is something to be learned from Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, then it may be that the content of their arguments is worth closer attention, and that eidetic numbers might be of some use in dealing with it.

Euthydemus's first question is whether it is the wise or the ignorant who learn (275D). He has no serious purpose in asking it, and certainly no desire to resolve it, but the question may nonetheless be serious in itself, and it may be serious precisely because it is ambiguous. In fact, it sounds a lot like a question raised by Meno at 80D of the dialogue that bears his name, and then restated by Socrates as a dilemma: how can anyone ever learn anything, since the wise would already know it and the ignorant wouldn't recognize what they seek if they stumbled on it. The resolution Socrates offers Meno is the myth of recollection, but in the *Euthydemus*, Socrates focuses on the fact that *learning* has two different meanings (277E). In one sense, only the ignorant can learn, as when someone is first taught to spell; in the other sense, only the wise can learn, and we might take the example of an expert mathematician who discovers something by calculating or proving it. But what if there is a kind of wisdom that can belong only to the ignorant, and a kind of ignorance that is itself a sign of wisdom? And of course there is such a thing, familiar to anyone who has read Plato's *Apology* (23A-B) as Socratic ignorance, which he calls human wisdom. The conception of learning that requires *that* kind of ignorance, which is itself a form of wisdom, is precisely what Socrates understands by philosophy. It does not stand on a foundation of understanding the way the mathematician's activity does, and it does not proceed out of sheer ignorance like that of the child who has not yet been taught to spell. Philosophic learning is not grounded on the authority of any teacher, or on any secure body of starting points for reasoning; it is grounded only in one's own power to recognize what is not knowledge, but only opinion, and to see directly when evidence succeeds in turning an opinion into something now securely understood. To embark on such an activity already breaks the deadlock of sophistical reasoning. To say what one is doing when learning in that way is to resolve the dilemma contained in Euthydemus's first question. And what kind of things are learnable in a philosophic way? The second question Euthydemus asks (276D) is whether learners learn what they know or what they don't know. Clearly, for philosophic learning to be possible, the thing learned must be in some way both known and unknown to us at once. This is a general outline of how one might begin to de-mythologize the myth of recollection in the *Meno*, which uses what has been forgotten as a metaphor for something unknown that also *is* known. In their own heedless way, Euthydemus and his brother are dancing around the edges of the most serious questions.

The last batch of arguments in the *Euthydemus*, from 297D on, the sort that argue that your dog is your father, seem to be mere abuses of logic, but I would suggest that the dozen or so sophistical arguments up to 296D, ending with the claim that if you know anything you know everything, are all worth taking seriously, and are all connected with the nature and possibility of philosophy. They all involve either/or choices. Now we might be tempted in such

cases to say that such alternatives are false because the truth in each case lies somewhere in between. But Socrates goes out of his way near the end of the dialogue (306A-B) to argue that anything that is between a pair of alternatives and shares in both is worse than both if they are both good, worse than one if one is good, and is only the better course when both extremes are bad. The passage is full of words in the dual. It suggests that we are on the right track in thinking that the dialogue invites us to try replacing each either/or with a both/and. If there is some truth on each side of a pair of claims that oppose one another, the task of getting beyond the dilemma would be accomplished if one could find a new conception that allows the truths on the two sides to be applicable, both together. This is exactly what the eidetic-number structure is designed to do. It conceives of being as requiring motion and rest, both together. And we have tried apply the same structure by saying that philosophy is guided by appearances and logical consequences, both together, that those who embark on philosophic learning are ignorant and wise, both together, and that the things capable of being inquired about in a philosophic way are known and unknown, both together. The very same dilemmas that provide Euthydemus with a way to win contests and make money can also provide material for deepening one's understanding of serious matters. And the guiding principle for this deepening, to which Socrates and Plato have led us, is to try to make whole what the sophists have kept divided.

So the duality so prominent in the *Euthydemus*, manifested first of all in the brother-sophists and their two-pronged assaults on their victims, and second in the paired arguments they use to bring thinking to a halt, can be seen most deeply in the things those arguments are concerned with. The logical dilemmas that follow from taking something to be or not be the case, or to have or not have some attribute, allow those sophists to prove everything and its opposite. But any such dilemma is resolved as soon as someone succeeds in expanding his thinking to make intelligible an object of thought that stands on both sides of the original logical divide at once, because each side is now understood as being what it is only by the simultaneous presence of the other side. Philosophy, the topics of philosophic questions, and learning of a philosophic kind are paradoxical objects of thought for just that reason, because they do not ordinarily appear to us, but require an adjustment of our usual thinking in order to come to sight at all, through a reinterpretation of ignorance and knowledge. Philosophic ignorance sees something very clearly, and philosophic knowing can emerge only out of such ignorance. This structure of unified duality is an eidetic number, a conception of a whole of parts in which each part is what it is only within the whole, and the whole is present only in both parts together. But that structure can clearly be extended beyond the number two, and I believe an example of this can be seen in the *Protagoras*. It is not surprising that indefinite manyness would turn up in the things Protagoras says, since his style is to dip into the stream of appearances wherever he pleases to single out one from among a variety of conflicting opinions. In the *Protagoras*, he speaks at length to fortify the impression that virtue is teachable, using the word "virtue" sometimes in the plural and sometimes

in the singular, and depicting it in various random examples. When he has finished speaking and the listeners have had time to recover from the spell, Socrates says "one little thing" keeps him from accepting what Protagoras has said (328E), "one little thing" that was missing and kept his presentation from being complete (329B), namely, whether the differing virtues are parts of one whole or names for one thing. The claim to teach virtue is familiar to us as the typical boast of the sophists (*Euthydemus* 273E, *Hippias Major* 283C), and from the other side, the desire to understand the unity of any topic under discussion is familiar to us as one of Socrates' typical "What-is" questions. This question is asked of virtue itself in the *Meno* (72A-D), where Socrates asks for a description of the single form or look one has one's eye on in calling a swarm of different things virtues. It is in the *Protagoras* that the what-is question and the sophistic boast meet directly.

In the *Meno*, the search for virtue itself begins with the tacit assumption that what is wanted is a conventional "definition" that would give the general class to which all virtues necessarily belong and the specific difference that is sufficient to make them virtues. Such a definition would articulate the one generic virtue that runs through or applies to (*dia pantôn* or *kata pantôn*) courage, moderation, wisdom, and all the vastly many (*pampollai*) virtues there may be (74A-B). A genus is indifferent to how many sub-classes one can find within it. But in the *Protagoras*, the emphasis of the question from the outset is on the wholeness of virtue and the possibility that it may have an exact number of parts. Socrates takes the combination of justice, moderation, and piety from Protagoras's speech (324E-325A), and extends the list to include wisdom and courage when Protagoras adds them (329E). At the same time, Socrates offers two examples of the relation of parts to a whole. Gold has parts that do not differ from one another, and we may note that it may have parts added to it or taken away without changing what it is or making it cease to be a whole. The parts of a face do differ, and for that reason Protagoras chooses that as the model for virtue. But when Socrates asks whether that means someone has to have all the virtues in order to have one, Protagoras is quick and emphatic in saying no. Many people are brave but unjust, or just but not wise, he says, disregarding, if not abandoning, the comparison to parts of a face. Socrates then pairs up virtues on the list in various combinations, justice and piety, wisdom and moderation, and moderation and justice, and argues that the members of each pair seem to be inseparable in one way or another, while Protagoras bobs and weaves and refuses to admit any of it. When the discussion resumes after a lengthy interruption, Socrates uses a long and complex argument to force Protagoras into a grudging admission that courage is wisdom (360D-E). Together with the premise, enthusiastically agreed to along the way by Protagoras, that knowledge is what can and should guide and rule human life (352B-D), Socrates' conclusion suggests that all the virtues consist of knowledge. This in turn may make it appear that Socrates has chosen the other model of wholeness, and found virtue to be like gold rather than like a face. The whole discussion, though, suggests that the comparison to the parts

of a face is the more revealing one, and that it collects more of what has been seen along the way.

The claim that virtue is knowledge was a famous Socratic paradox; in the *Meno* (87B-C), Socrates offers it as a hypothesis rather than an opinion. But when the same application of this claim to courage that Socrates makes in the *Protagoras* is made in the *Laches* as well, he not only says that courage is wisdom (194D), but goes on to draw the explicit conclusion that the kind of wisdom courage is would be impossible without moderation, justice, and piety. It would not be enough in that case to say that all five virtues are various kinds or sub-classes of knowledge; they would have to be seen as distinguishable parts of an indivisible whole. In setting up the analogy to the parts of a face in the *Protagoras*, Socrates had asked whether someone who has one virtue has to have them all, and his argument in the *Laches* makes it likely that his own answer would be affirmative. And this same thing is evident from the *Protagoras* itself if we begin putting together some of its pieces. The analogy to gold would be complete if moderation, justice, and piety were found to presuppose wisdom in the same way courage does, and wisdom were seen to consist of knowledge, *and* the interconnectedness among the virtues stopped there. The first two conditions are met in the *Protagoras* either explicitly or by strong implication, but the connections among the virtues do *not* stop there. Socrates does not argue only in the direction that makes courage, moderation, justice, and piety dependent on wisdom, but in the opposite direction as well. At least he leaves open that possibility when he raises the question whether wisdom and moderation are the same thing (333B); the fact that they have the same opposite, a lack of good sense, suggests some sort of equivalence between them. The attributes that make someone wise may depend on those that make someone moderate just as much as the reverse. And not all the relations among the virtues that Socrates argues for are traced to or through wisdom. Justice is itself something pious, Socrates says, and piety is something just (331B). And another pairing not involving wisdom is made when Socrates asks whether it is possible to be moderate about doing injustice (333B-C). Protagoras manages to escape answering, and at that point the discussion of the virtues is broken off for a long time. But if we try to collect the steps it has already taken, and look for a pattern into which they fit, we see something more like a face than a lump of gold. If we turn from perceptible to geometric images, I suggest that we do not see a pie-chart divided into five sections, but something like a regular pentagon sharing its vertices with a five-pointed star. From the virtue at each vertex, lines would run to each of the other four, and each line would represent a relation of mutual dependence.

Now this schematic representation of the virtues is a highly artificial way of approaching the question of what it is that makes a life good and a human being happy. But like any eidetic-number structure, it is only a theoretical guide to, and no substitute for, philosophic thinking. The *Cratylus* passage we noted above (432A-433A) tells us that if virtue is like a number, no part can be taken from or added to it without making it cease to be what it is. The *Hippias Major* passage (300A-303D) tells us that no part of it can be a virtue

at all except in combination with the other four. We still have to fill in the content in more than name, but the structure sets limits to what we can say about that content, and to that extent defines it. What is the wisdom that is part of human virtue? If it is a kind of wisdom impossible in the absence of courage, moderation, justice, and piety, it cannot be exclusively theoretical in nature, nor can it be any one of the practical arts. Hippias is knowledgeable in all four branches of mathematics, but seems immoderate in his love of money, while Euthydemus is skilled in the art of fighting in armor, but unjust in his tactics at winning arguments, and if we have the impression that neither man is wise, we may cite the principle of the eidetic number as sufficient confirmation. Protagoras himself specifies the kind of wisdom he claims to impart to make his students better human beings (318E). He calls it *euboulia*, which is translated here as the power to make good decisions, and Socrates adopts this meaning of wisdom when he links it with moderation (333D). The conclusion that courage is wisdom would then mean that it involves making good decisions about when to go where most people fear to go, and this in turn helps to clarify a dispute between Protagoras and Socrates (349E-351B). Protagoras wants to say that courage is completely separable from the other four virtues, but he also says that courageous people are audacious. (The word *tharraleos* could be translated as "daring" insofar as it applies to courage, but Protagoras accepts the same word at 359C-D as applicable to cowards too, for their shamelessness. "Audacious" is the translation chosen here to cover both uses.) It is usually thought that Socrates makes a logical mistake by assuming that if the courageous are all audacious, the audacious must all be courageous, and that Protagoras corrects him, but in fact Socrates separates audacity into two parts, one stemming from wisdom and the other from craziness. His logical point is not that all audacity is courage, but that the only kind of audacity courage can be makes it inseparable from wisdom. Protagoras counters with a threefold division of audacity, reducing the kind of wisdom that can give rise to courage to art, keeping craziness as a second source, and adding spiritedness as a third (351A-B). When he then says that courage comes from nature and a good nurture of souls, he can only logically mean that the natural basis of courage is spiritedness, and that it becomes courage through some wholly unspecified kind of nurture. Does that nurture temper spiritedness with wisdom? With moderation? With justice? With piety? With all four? Protagoras has eliminated all these options by claiming that a lot of people are very unjust, impious, self-indulgent, and unintelligent, yet exceptionally courageous (349D). Protagoras's victory over Socrates in logic is a mere appearance; the conception of courage as part an inseparable whole of five virtues remains unrefuted, and is the more revealing and fruitful way to think about the very analysis Protagoras offers as evidence against it.

Protagoras's claim that courage is entirely separate from the other virtues is accompanied by an admission that the other four are pretty close to one another (349D). This is a shift from his earlier opinion that all five are separate and independent (329E), despite the fact that any two things, even when they are as different as black and white, can be found to be alike in some little

respect (331D-E). The underlying appearance that leads him to hold out for the independence of courage is the common observation that many people who are admirable in no other way can be daring fighters on the battlefield. The proposal that virtue is an indivisible whole requires us to ask whether that sort of audacity deserves the name of courage. This is not a question about nuances of words, like the one that prompts Prodicus to distinguish fear and terror (358D-E). It is an invitation to question oneself about what makes courage something a human being needs in order to live a satisfying life. Where mere audacity ends and genuine courage begins is not a matter of words or of logic, but a stepping stone in a philosophic quest for a better life; by pressing the assumption of the wholeness of virtue, Socrates points to a path that quest might pursue. And something similar happens with moderation, in the passage immediately following the one we have been looking at. Here too, many readers have been confused about what Socrates is saying, and have criticized him for saying it. In his argument from 351B to 358D, Socrates seems to assume that the ultimate good in human life is pleasure. This is startling to readers who are familiar with his argument in the *Gorgias* (491E-500A) that if there are better and worse pleasures, the good cannot *be* pleasure but must be an independent standard by which they are ranked; he argues more elaborately to similar effect in the *Philebus* (60A-67B). A Socrates who would abandon that point of view is not the Socrates we think we know. But what Socrates asks in the *Protagoras* is whether all pleasure, in and of itself, *is* good (351C). It is Protagoras, who was on guard against just such an illogical inference about courage and audacity, who takes this to imply that the pleasant and the good would be the same thing (351E). What permits the claim that all pleasure is good to be converted into the claim that all good is pleasure is a new premise that comes into the argument when Socrates asks whether the general run of people have any end in view in their lives other than pleasure and pain, by which to judge anything good or bad (354B-E). Protagoras agrees that they do not. Socrates then proceeds to argue that the good can be nothing other than a balance of pleasure over pain in the long run, and this is what shocks some readers, but that is a consequence that follows only for human beings who have no standard other than pleasure and pain by which to measure pleasure and pain. In such a case, the standard for a good life is merely quantitative, and is in principle unlimited. Socrates never agrees with the premise on which that conclusion rests, which is completely at odds with any conception of a wholeness of virtue, according to which a number of qualitatively different things make a life good, and each of them is limited by its compatibility with the others.

The appearance that underlies the discussion of pleasure in the *Protagoras* is the common experience that people describe by saying they often know perfectly well what is best but fail to do it because they are overcome by pleasure or pain (352D-E). Socrates does not explicitly mention the virtue of moderation (*sôphrosunê*) in this passage, but just as the first example anyone would give of courage would be daring on the battlefield, the first example of moderation anyone would think of would be an overcoming of, or steadfastness against,

the power of pleasure and pain. Socrates argues here that this countervailing power must be some sort of knowledge and art of measurement; what sort in particular it is, he leaves to be examined some other time (357B). But he repeatedly refers to this power as the salvation (*sôtêria*) that saves (*sôzein*) our lives from being dragged back and forth by pleasure and pain, and permits the soul to hold itself at rest (356E and following). The adjective *sôs*, safe and sound, is the common root of the words for saving, salvation, *and* moderation, and the particular salvation described displays the character of the *sôphrôn*, the moderate human being. The other root in the word for moderation is *phronein*, to exercise judgment, and Socrates had defined being moderate as exercising good judgment when he equated it with wisdom at 333D. But should we understand moderation as a salvation *by* wisdom or *of* wisdom? Does the exercise of judgment keep a human being safe, or does a human being need to have a certain state of character in order to keep his judgment sound? The picture Socrates paints of a calculation of the greater balance of pleasure in the long run would be a salvation by knowledge. In philosophic journals and other secondary literature, this is called "Socratic intellectualism," and criticized as an unrealistic picture of human psychology. But first of all, Socrates is saying that the general run of human beings do *not* stop to think before acting in ways that they later regret, and that knowledge would be a necessary precondition for avoiding their bad choices. Even if they have in view no end higher or more worthwhile than their own pleasure, Socrates shows, yielding to any pleasure on offer at the moment it appears makes their lives failures on their own terms. The paradoxical but philosophically sound result is that the virtue of moderation is necessary even for the successful pursuit of pleasure. Presumably this is also in accord with the psychologically respectable principle that successful outcomes in life depend on an ability to defer gratification. What critics object to as unrealistic intellectualism is the assumption that knowledge alone would be sufficient to rescue people from their bad decisions.

But is Socrates claiming that knowledge is the *only* thing needed to bring about the desired balance of pleasures? That sounds like saying knowledge is the generic active ingredient that constitutes all virtue. It sounds like a violation of the understanding of virtue as a whole in which every part is dependent on every other part. When Socrates noted that wisdom and moderation have the same opposite (333B), he raised the possibility that they are two names for the same thing. But two distinct but interconnected things can also share a common opposite. It is often said that indifference is the opposite of both love and hate. If we could disentangle the interconnections between wisdom and moderation, we might see that both of them together are needed to oppose the experience called being overcome by pleasure. And it seems to be agreed on all sides that whenever someone yields to the pleasure of the moment and regrets it afterward, a failure of knowledge of some kind is involved. But the general run of human beings assign this to the weakness *of* knowledge, while Socrates ascribes the weakness of the human being to a *lack* of knowledge. Protagoras has to come down on Socrates' side on that point, because his whole

claim to teach virtue depends on denying that knowledge is too weak a thing to guide and rule human life (352B-D). The highly comical and deeply serious result of his agreement is that Protagoras dismisses the opinions of human beings in general as worthless, since they just say anything that happens to strike them (353A), and embraces the view that the measure of all things that make a life good is knowledge (356E). Socrates has finally managed to make Protagoras stand still for a brief stretch of dialectic, and that is enough to get him to renounce the principle on which his brand of sophistry rests. This is a turnabout as dramatic as the one he executed when Socrates watched him going up and down the colonnaded walk with a throng of followers (314A-315B), and it is no accident that the second about-face occurs in the middle of a discussion of moderation. The basis of sophistry of the Protagorean type is that there is no standard of knowledge other than the appearance of the moment. Protagoras not only exploits this attitude in his listeners but adheres to it himself. This is why he got so irritated when Socrates challenged his impression that the virtues are all separable (332A, 333E), and why he ends the dialogue backing up so grudgingly from speaking to nodding to barely nodding to making no response at all (360C-D) when his later impression that courage at least is separate from the rest is overturned. Protagoras is in the habit of yielding to the apparent truth of the momentary impression just as so many human beings are in the habit of yielding to the apparent good of the momentary pleasure. We suggested earlier that the lack of moderation in Hippias's lust for money would have to disqualify his claim to wisdom, if the virtues form one whole of the eidetic-number type. Now we can see more clearly how the same principle applies to Protagoras.

Moderation depends on wisdom even if the knowledge needed for good decisions is just a memory of past consequences of yielding to pleasure. But such knowledge is not sufficient if one cannot gain access to it in the present in order to apply it to the future. An immoderate or self-indulgent human being who always knows better, but never learns his lesson, would be like the mythical Epimetheus. In his story of the origin of the human race, Protagoras had said that Epimetheus was not really very wise at all, because crucial things that he knew, or could have known, escaped his notice when he was making his decisions (321B-C). Someone who is swept away by the pleasure of the moment does have knowledge, as the general run of human beings say, but is also ignorant, as Socrates says. Self-indulgent people are forgetful. They have knowledge, but have no access to it at the moment they need it. In order to be effective, the wisdom that guides decisions about pleasure depends on a habit of moderation, in the sense of holding still long enough to measure the present appearance against remembered experience. The wisdom presupposed by moderation also presupposes moderation. This would be an impossibility if each had to precede the other in time, but a pair of mutually dependent attributes can be acquired together gradually. What is impossible according to the principle of the eidetic number is for either of the two ever to be acquired alone. And Protagoras is in front of us as an example of someone who is not wise because he is not moderate. He has built his career on the principle that

there is no standard of truth other than the appearance of the moment, and we see how he can sweep a crowd up into applause and approval. What Socrates asks him to do is to hold still a while in order to see how the appearance holds up to scrutiny, or stacks up against alternatives. Protagoras understands this. When Socrates asks him whether all pleasure, in and of itself, is good, Protagoras replies (351E), "It's just as you keep saying all the time, Socrates; let's examine it, and if the point under examination seems to be agreeable to reason, and the pleasant and the good appear to be the same thing, then we'll get together on that, but if not, that will be the time when we'll debate it." In other words, the time to judge an appearance is not the moment it strikes one, but after gathering up other appearances connected with it. This sort of reflection would be most effective in someone who is wise, but wisdom is useless without the habit of pausing to reflect. Socrates says at the end of the dialogue (361D) that Prometheus is more to his liking than Epimetheus, but that forethought requires effort, and effort requires willingness. The Protagorean style is impulsive, and defeats wisdom; the Promethean temperament is moderate, and is a prerequisite for wisdom.

The eidetic-number interpretation of the wholeness of virtue, then, suggests that daring or audacity is not the courage that makes life better unless it is united with a wisdom that makes good decisions; that knowledge alone is not the wisdom that makes good decisions unless it is united with a moderation that makes room for reflection; and, conversely, that a temperament that make room for reflection amid the enticements of pleasures would not be moderation without the wisdom to choose those pleasures that do contribute to the enhancement of life. With a fivefold eidetic number, unfolding even in outline the whole "definition" of virtue would require exploring twenty relations of dependence. And from our current perspective, it is possible to see that much of the content of the dialogues fits into such an unfolding. In Book I of the *Republic* (348C-D), Thrasymachus claims that no one who is wise would ever be just, and in the *Gorgias* (491E-492C), Callicles claims that no one who is courageous would ever be moderate, and in both cases Socrates brings out evidence to the contrary through argument, in images, and by example. And in the *Republic* as well (485D-487A), Socrates argues that the pursuit of wisdom depends on the other virtues just as much as they depend on "intellectual" virtue. We are not going to examine any more of these relations here, but there is one more pairing of virtues in the *Protagoras* that needs to be mentioned, and our reference to the *Republic* reveals a lack of harmony between the two dialogues. Socrates says in the former (331B) that justice is pious and piety is just, but in the latter he does not include piety among the cardinal virtues at all, but says that complete goodness consists of wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice (427E). The fourfoldness of virtue is traced in the *Republic* to the threefoldness of the human soul, with one virtue belonging to each part and the fourth producing unity among them, and the Athenian Stranger in Plato's *Laws* ascribes the unity and wholeness of virtue to the same four (965D). (The Stranger uses the word *phronêsis* instead of *sophia* for wisdom, but those two words are also interchanged in the *Republic* at 433B.) The inclusion of piety

among the necessary and sufficient virtues in the *Protagoras* is Protagoras's doing, but in the *Laches* (199D) Socrates adds it himself. How are we to think about the discrepancy? In the *Euthyphro* (12D), Socrates takes what is pious to be a part of what is just. If we think of justice as recognizing and giving what is due to others, piety would be justice toward the gods. But it may also be that piety, whatever it contributes to the goodness of life, has to be excluded from the list of virtues precisely because of the eidetic-number principle. In the *Republic* (427B-C), Socrates says that anyone with any sense can see that we know nothing at all about pious observances, and ought simply to follow ancestral customs. If piety is outside the scope of human wisdom, it is also outside the unity of the virtues, which develop the human powers to their fullest in concert with one another.

If the number of virtues is four rather than five, the number of relations of dependency is reduced from twenty to twelve. Even so, to see that each virtue is better understood when the other three codetermine it is merely to scratch the surface of a long dialectical inquiry. But it is appropriate that the beginning of this dialectical path is opened up in the presence of Protagoras. When Socrates asks his one little question about the wholeness of virtue, Protagoras' immediate reply is "that's easy to answer" (329D), as he offers the first impression that pops into his head. Does having one virtue require having them all? "By no means." His confident tone is that of a man who allows the appearance of the moment to drive out all possible competing appearances, and who believes he can always make what appears to him appear just as strongly to anyone else within the sound of his voice. The idea that one might have to survey twenty connections among five parts of a whole to see what one is talking about would deprive Protagoras of his preeminence in wisdom. A look at just one of those connections has revealed to us that his own lack of moderation deprives him of any claim to wisdom. His form of sophistry makes one appearance drive out all others while it is appearing, just as self-indulgence in pleasures allows the apparent good of the pleasure of the moment to drive out all knowledge of its consequences. Let us recall that we took a passage early in the *Cratylus* as an invitation to look at Protagoras and Euthydemus as marking out two poles that would reveal the nature of sophistry. We saw that Euthydemus did put opposite statements together side-by-side, with each displayed as a logical conclusion. But the requirements of his version of sophistry prevented anyone from asking which conclusion seemed right, or which of two arguments that used the same word meant it in a way that seemed more appropriate. The result of the sophistical approach from either side is to isolate opinions, one at a time for Protagoras, as any of them takes the stage replacing all others, and two at a time for Euthydemus as pairs of opposites accumulate in a pile that cannot be reduced. The *Euthydemus* highlighted the latter form of sophistical stasis by placing it around the edges of a conception of learning that uses the tension between opposite conclusions as a source of forward motion. The *Protagoras* highlights his form of slavery to appearances by placing it against a picture of people dragged back and forth by pleasures because they lack the

virtue of character that would allow any knowledge they have to be available and consequential in their lives when they need it.

We took the pairing of Protagoras and Euthydemus as an image on a lower, sophistic level of the pair of philosophers Parmenides and Heracleitus. We can see now that Parmenides may have overcorrected the Protagorean susceptibility to appearances by insisting upon a preliminary pause for examination of all consequences of all relevant hypotheses and their opposites. Similarly, Heracleitus may have overcorrected Euthydemus's imperviousness to contradictory conclusions by his direct embrace of opposites in sayings such as "immortals are mortal, mortals are immortal, living the death of the other and dying their life." Heracleitus spoke of a hidden harmony that made all opposites agree, but did not attempt to bring it out of hiding, preferring to imitate the oracular style of Apollo. (See fragments 62, 54, 51, and 93 in the Diels-Kranz numbering.) The dialectical approach of Socrates might be seen as striking a balance between Protagoras's self-indulgence and Parmenides' self-denying discipline. And the eidetic-number proposal that comes from Plato's unwritten teachings might provide a more articulated approach than Heracleitus's to harmonizing the tension of opposites that Euthydemus leaves in discord. But what Parmenides, Heracleitus, Socrates, and Plato have in common is a drive toward the wholeness in things. The sophists we have been looking at all have other ends to which the life of the intellect is merely a means—money, victory in competition, prestige—and the things they talk about are left in pieces. But does not the typical Platonic dialogue leave things piecemeal as well? Does not Socrates pull apart the opinions other people offer and end up saying they do not know enough to put them back together? In fact, exactly this charge is made against Socrates in one of the dialogues in this book. Hippias, a sophist of the Protagorean type, complains in the *Hippias Major* (301B-C) that it is Socrates and the people he likes to discuss things with who dismember those things. He, Hippias, he claims, is wise and discerning enough to leave "such great bodies of being" as the nature of beauty unbroken. It is worth taking a closer look at the ways the two men approach the topic of the beautiful, and what they make of it.

The pattern of the *Hippias Major* resembles that of a number of other dialogues in which Socrates asks what something is, various answers are tried out and found to be inadequate, and the question is left unresolved. Hippias makes three attempts to say what the beautiful is, and Socrates makes three more, before Hippias dismisses the result of it all as scraps and shreds of nonsensical garbage that only a complete idiot would choose to get mixed up in (304A-B). But in similar discussions in other dialogues, it is sometimes possible to see a general outline of an adequate answer emerge, if one looks closely at why and how the unsuccessful answers failed. We have seen that more was being uncovered about the wholeness of virtue in the *Protagoras* than was ever remarked on in that dialogue. And in the *Theaetetus*, after a long examination and rejection of the claim that knowledge is perception, Socrates asks Theaetetus to take the content of the arguments that led to that negative result and turn them into a positive characterization of knowing (187A), but

the young man jumps to a different answer that does not preserve and gather up the threads of the previous discussion. Rarely if ever in the dialogues does any of the people Socrates speaks with manage such a feat. On occasion, as in the *Theaetetus*, the *Gorgias*, or Book I of the *Republic*, Socrates uses failed answers to draw new people in the discussions, but in all cases Plato's art lures us, the readers, into trying to do better than the characters we see failing. Plato's technique for stimulating the effort to learn was re-invented, or adapted, in 1975 by the biologist Dietma Todt as a way of training animals, called model/rival learning. It was used, for example, by Irene Pepperberg in teaching some rudiments of language to an African gray parrot named Alex; when one of his trainers would deliberately give a wrong answer, Alex would behave like a very young schoolchild waving its arm, bouncing in its seat, and saying "*I* know, *I* know." In the *Hippias Major*, we can witness the comical sight of Hippias himself stepping out of his role as model answerer into that of his own rival, to claim he could surely come up with a better answer if he could go away alone for a while (295A, 297E), but he soon gives up even that idle intention as a waste of his talents. If there are any positive contributions in the dialogue toward understanding the beautiful, we will have to gather them up for ourselves.

When Socrates first asks what the beautiful is, Hippias takes this to be the same as asking what is beautiful, and replies with complete certainty that a beautiful girl is beautiful (287E). When Socrates points out that this answer does not apply to all beautiful things, or even purport to be the most beautiful among them, and asks what it is that by its presence makes all beautiful things beautiful, Hippias replies that that's the easiest question of all to answer: everything is made beautiful by the presence of gold (289E). Socrates points out that even the golden statue of Athena in the Parthenon was not made with golden eyes, and that a golden ladle would be inappropriate to use with even the most beautifully crafted soup pot. Hippias is highly offended at the inappropriateness of the latter example in a high-toned discussion, and exasperated with the constant objections, and replies that what is beautiful always and everywhere and to everyone without exception is a complete life filled with wealth and honor, health and length of days, and the giving and receiving of public funerals to one's parents and from one's children (291D-E). Hippias does not see any force in the objection that this does not say anything about beautiful actions or learnable things, but he has to admit that the funerals would not be appropriate to the beautiful lives of gods or demigods. This is the extent of Hippias' contribution to subject, and it is clear that he will never grasp that none of his answers even tries to say what beauty *itself* (*auto kallos*) is (292D). But even Hippias's answers have made some steps toward beauty itself, and we can learn something by paying attention to them. What prompts him to say that the beautiful is a girl, gold, or a good long life? If we gather together his spontaneous answer about a beautiful girl, his ready admission that thoroughly beautiful horses are born in his part of the world too, and his reluctant agreement that a well-made and well-designed piece of pottery would in some sense be beautiful, it seems reasonable to suppose

that he finds beauty in things that are outstanding instances of their kinds. And the fact that he next thinks not of any and every kind of adornment that beautifies things but especially of gold suggests that he is looking at beauty as something that shines forth. And indeed, the underlying notions in his first two answers are combined in his third, since it takes human life at its most beautiful to be visible in the completeness that involves the conspicuous possession of bodily vigor, wealth, honor, and public piety toward parents, and is rounded out in death in a conspicuous funeral. We might try to restate what is behind his answers by saying that as Hippias looks at it, beauty is the resplendent property of anything that makes visible the full development of everything that belongs to its kind. Hippias himself never discovers that this is what he thinks, if it is what lies behind what he says, because he wants to go away and think of a more impressive answer, rather than staying where he is and examining the three he already has.

Socrates too makes three attempts to say what the beautiful is. He attributes the first to an unnamed severe critic of all their answers, but he later admits that critic is himself (298B-C). First, in view of the earlier discussion, he suggests that the beautiful is the appropriate (293E). Hippias agrees, since clothes well fitted to the occasion can make even a funny-looking person appear beautiful, but Socrates worries about this discrepancy between appearing and being. And since that discrepancy would not be present in things that appear to be beautiful instances of their kinds if they do the work and achieve the ends of those kinds, Socrates offers as his second answer that the beautiful is the useful (295C), and to guard against applying it to things useful for bad ends, he amends this to the beneficial (296E). But again there is a problem, since the beneficial is a cause of the good as a means to an end, and this would make it impossible for the beautiful to *be* the good. Socrates tries a third and last answer, that the good produced by the beautiful is enjoyment or pleasure that comes through hearing and sight (297E). The application of this answer to beautiful customs troubles Socrates, but what makes it break down is the double qualification of hearing and sight. It is meant to separate the "aesthetic" pleasures from the bodily ones, but if an invisible piece of music and an inaudible painting are both beautiful, the answer says nothing about what it is in each that is the beautiful itself, and we are back again to the original question. This is the point at which Socrates introduces the property of the number two, of belonging to its parts only when both are together, but if we take the last answer in that sense, then neither a piece of music nor a painting could ever qualify as beautiful. And one attempt by Socrates to amend the last answer, by characterizing the beautiful pleasures as those that do no harm but only good, fails as well, since it takes us back to calling the beautiful beneficial rather than good. Hippias ends with his observation that Socrates has turned the beautiful into disconnected scraps of garbage, while Socrates claims to have been benefited by his encounter with *both* Hippias and his own internal critic.

What can we gather from Socrates' three answers? Our earlier discussion of eidetic numbers makes it seem likely that the apparently irrelevant emphasis Socrates puts on the properties of the number two will be of some use. And it

turns out that it does address the difficulties with all three answers, since each results in failure to unify some pair of notions. Identifying the beautiful with the appropriate led to a divergence of appearance and being. Hippias claimed that what is appropriate makes things both be and appear beautiful (294C), but Socrates cites the examples of beautiful pursuits that go unrecognized by some people and beautiful customs that go unrecognized by some cities. What we have learned from examining the *Euthydemus* invites us to try resolving the difficulty by coming up with a new conception that makes appearance and being dependent upon one another, and in this case we are helped by recalling Hippias's example of gold. An ugly body may be covered up by beautiful clothes, but gold is something that has the radiant property of appearing the more beautiful the more it is purely what it is. To be gold and nothing else, unmixed and unmarred, is to shine, as though *un*dressing it is what makes it appear beautiful. One criterion of the beautiful, then, may be that it belongs only, or most properly, to things that reveal rather than conceal what they are. The difficulty Socrates' second answer runs into is the difference between means and ends. The beneficial is an instrumental good, a means to a true good, and the eidetic-number principle suggests that we should conceive of something that unites the properties of means and end. It may be that the beautiful is found only in things that are ends in themselves. Here Hippias's other two answers come to our aid. The beautiful girl may be attractive sexually, but is not her beauty also something self-contained, a visible property of just being what she is? It is in this sense that the sight of supple young humanity in Nausicaa makes Odysseus feel that there is a future and life is still possible (*Odyssey* VI, 160-168). Similarly, when Hippias calls the horses born in his region beautiful, he is not likely to be thinking of them as useful for pulling plows or carrying riders. Socrates' brief impulse to call the beautiful the useful is in fact not only wrong but upside-down. The beautiful is what strikes us as transcending all use and displays itself as being what it is for its own sake. A golden ladle is a particularly perverse example, at odds with itself from whatever angle we look at it, since its form is meant for use while its material is meant only to be looked at. But Hippias's example of a complete human life *is* meant to be something that displays its end in itself. The only problem is with its content. As Socrates remarks, Hippias's picture of a complete life does not include any actions or learning (292D); it presents a life but there is no life in it. The fusion of means and end in a single thing would seem to require some sort of activity rather than a static display of possessions or attributes, and it would be that activity that displayed what the thing is.

The pair of opposing elements that need to be combined in Socrates' third answer is easy to find, but it is harder to make sense of. If the beautiful would be found in things that reveal what they are in their activity, why should it matter whether the pleasure they give us comes through sight or hearing or both? If something beautiful can be revealed in a painting or a piece of music, would it be more beautiful in a form that unites spectacle and music, such as Greek tragedy or modern opera? This sets up no resonance in the dialogue that I can find, but there *is* an example there of a performance that gives pleasure

through both those senses at once. Hippias reports that he has composed a thoroughly beautiful speech about beautiful pursuits, that it gave enjoyment to his audience in Sparta, and that he will be delivering it again in Athens two days hence, when Socrates should be sure to come and to bring along other people of discernment (285E-286C). Socrates had commented earlier on the beauty of the choice of words in which Hippias conveys his thoughts (282B), and he calls attention later to the beautiful clothes and shoes Hippias is wearing (291A). There is at least a suggestion here that Hippias's speech might not be so beautiful without the spectacle of himself in his fine array, and that this spectacle is made more impressive by its appropriate accompaniment of stately words. The kind of sophist Hippias is, who is in the business of producing appearances, has to look and sound the part, unlike Socrates, who is notoriously ugly to look at and, in his role of harsh critic, to listen to as well, caring nothing about dignity and only about truth (288D). The final attempt in the dialogue to say what the beautiful is would then have the effect of ridiculing Hippias. But we have seen in the *Protagoras* and the *Euthydemus* that the comic depiction of sophists has its serious side, and in the light cast on those dialogues by a passage in the *Cratylus* we concluded that sophistry had a cure in the combining of its two extremes. And combining a reliance on appearance with a reliance on logical consequences sounds not unlike enjoying what comes from seeing and hearing together. If deciding what appears to be true can be considered a kind of seeing, while examining its implications takes place in predications through a kind of hearing, then Socratic dialectic may provide a satisfaction that depends on seeing and hearing together. Or we might put the emphasis on the fact that two people participate in common in that dialectic, and take the union of seeing and hearing to come about as each looks at how something appears to him and listens to what the other says about it. On either interpretation, the Socratic dialectic that we have already proposed as the antidote to sophistry would turn out to meet the requirements of the last attempt in the *Hippias Major* to say what the beautiful is: an activity with the twofold property that allows access to the enjoyment of the beautiful.

The sight and hearing that make Hippias's displays impressive are passive; the eyes and ears of the audience are worked on by the sophist. The seeing and hearing that go on in dialectic are the work of the one seeing and hearing. In the *Cratylus* (399C), Socrates says that passive sensing belongs to the other animals, while human beings are defined by the fact that we look into, gather up, and observe what we see. Hippias had found beauty that shines like gold in a girl, poised on the brink of her fully human life, and in an old man, with all his life behind him. Socrates had called attention to the void this picture exposed, with its lack of action or learning. If the thread we have been following has anything to it, Socrates seems to be pointing us to the activity of learning in a philosophic quest for the way things are, and to suggest that it is in the philosophic quest for the beautiful itself that human beauty is to be seen, revealing human beings as what we are and ends in ourselves. That would mean we are what we are most of all in asking what something is. The what-is question looks toward what Socrates calls the *eidos*,

and this too is understood as self-revealing, displaying the thing sought in *its* fullness. The attainment and enjoyment of a knowledge of the *eidos*, as opposed to the quest for it, would be an activity of contemplation, and this too could be understood as perhaps the highest fusion of seeing and hearing, holding together and beholding in one whole all the content examined in speech as one learns. If Hippias's three answers about the beautiful center on the shining human image, but leave it undisclosed, the three answers Socrates gives seem to supply that image of the human being, but point to the *eidê*, the knowable things, as the self-revealing objects of contemplation, at their own end in being contemplated, as the ultimate answer to the question, what is the beautiful itself? In one last union of a pair of opposites, the fusion of knower and known in the act of contemplation would be the end toward which all encounters with the beautiful would point.

We have been guided through this discussion of beauty by the notion of the eidetic number, which led us to look for ways to unite appearance and being, means and ends, and seeing and hearing. This suggests that beauty is the eidetic number six. The total number of answers given in the dialogue is also six, and the number of ingredients Hippias lists in a completely fulfilled human life is six once again. Socrates in his first speech calls Hippias beautiful and wise, and in his second calls him a wise and perfect (*teleios*) man. This seems to equate the beautiful with the perfect, and in a mathematical use of that word, six is the first perfect number, a whole number equal to the sum of its own proper parts, those parts being the lesser numbers that can be divided into it without remainder. It is unknown whether the word *teleios* was used in that sense as early as Plato's time, but the scholar Fabio Acerbi wrote in 2005 that any historian of ancient mathematics would bet that perfect numbers were known to him. But in spite of all these pointers, I am unwilling to say that the conception of the beautiful to which the dialogue directs us is meant to be a whole with six parts. Each of the three pairs of attributes we put together led us farther along, but I have been unable to see the same sort of relations of mutual dependence among them that make the five, or four, virtues necessary and sufficient constituents of happiness, and bring out the meanings of each of them as parts within a whole. In the *Symposium* (211B), Socrates reports that Diotima taught him that the beautiful itself, in virtue of itself by itself (*auto kath' hauto meth' hautou*) is always unitary in form (*monoeides*). The eidetic number hypothesis must involve an eidetic analogue of the unit (*monas*), and this seems to be named the good itself in the *Republic* (509B), as that which makes each thing be what it is and be knowable. In the *Symposium* it seems to be re-named the beautiful, as that which draws the knowing soul toward itself. In the *Protagoras*, the virtues turned out to be like the parts of a face, but the other possibility Socrates had raised when he first asked that question was whether they might be names for the same thing. It may be that the same thing is being named as the beautiful when it is apprehended as giving pleasure through sight and hearing together, and as the good when it is seen as the ultimate end in itself; perhaps, when it is understood as that which reveals itself as it is, it should be named the true. And if it is meant to be that

in virtue of which each constituent of an eidetic number is both whole and part, it might also be what is named in the *Parmenides* as the one itself.

I have no particular insight to offer about what is being named by these names, but a few conclusions can be drawn from thinking about the role of the unit in each of the kinds of number. A mathematical unit has no content that would permit it to be differentiated from another unit or divided within itself, and has no attribute at all except to be countable without limit. In the ordinary sense of the Greek word *arithmos*, as a multitude of perceptible things, the unit always does have content, but the addition of unit to unit in the act of counting is again unlimited. Someone who is counting chickens needs to know what counts as a chicken, and that tells him what to include in and exclude from his count, but the unit is indifferent to the total that may in any instance be reached in such a count. In an eidetic number, not only does every unit have content, but that content also determines the size of the number to which it belongs, since there is one and only one multitude of which it is a part. And while the units in any eidetic number all differ from one another, they are all alike in determining the same whole as limiting them and making them what they are. As the units of being, motion and rest must interpenetrate in such a way that the whole is within each part, and each part reveals the whole as exactly twofold. Any of the units of virtue, once it is fully understood, would reveal the presence of the rest and reveal as well whether their total number is five or four. The perceptible unit determines what goes into the total but has nothing to say about its size. The mathematical unit does not even limit what goes into a total but merely allows a total of any size to be generated. But the eidetic unit, since its nature is determined by the whole to which it belongs, also reciprocally limits and determines that whole. The whole is in the part just as much as the part is in the whole. This property of not being whole, but being what it is only within a whole which is also present within it, is what it would have to mean to be an eidetic unit. And this harmony of whole and part, as well as instance and kind, may be what we have been bumping into in, or glimpsing behind, all the guises of the beautiful. Motion and rest are not the same, and neither of them is the same as courage, but they all share the property of being knowable within eidetic wholes, and hence being units in eidetic numbers. From three dialogues named for sophists and devoted to revealing their characteristic activities, we have been able to gather up indications that pairs of opposing conceptions may be unified, that one complex human topic may be a whole present within each of its parts, and that the fundamental requirement for intelligibility may be the property of residing within such a whole. It would be easy to be dismissive of Euthydemus as a logical trickster, of Protagoras as a clever manipulator of shifting appearances, and of Hippias as a pompous fool, but Socrates spends time bringing into view something worth examining in what each of them does, and Plato seems to be inviting us to follow what we see in them to some of the highest philosophic questions.

It is worth pausing to notice that in none of these dialogues was Socrates searching for a definition of any word. The last part of the *Protagoras* ends up

with its focus on what courage is, but the point was not to articulate how the word is used. Protagoras is probably closer to that than Socrates is when he claims people can be very courageous and lack all the other virtues. "Courage is daring on the battlefield" would sum up that usage tolerably well. Why not accept that and stop there, or just grant that it is as good as anything else people might agree to mean by the word? Protagoras could probably whip up a little extemporaneous speech to make that meaning vivid and convincing. The only problem is that it may not be adequate to courage itself. The word may be drawing our gaze to something we have never thought to put into words. If virtue has an inherent wholeness, then courage may bear traces of all its other parts. The hypothesis that virtue is a whole is not an arbitrary one, and it implies that language can take apart things that cannot *be* apart. The one sophist who participates in these dialogues whom we have not discussed is Prodicus, who specializes in words, and at 337A-C of the *Protagoras* we see what that means: a joint hearing is not an equal one, a dispute need not be a quarrel, respect is more than praise, and appreciation goes beyond pleasure. These are all good observations, not only about word usage but also as advice about how to conduct and listen to a civilized discussion. Socrates claims in the *Theaetetus* (151B) that he sometimes sends students to Prodicus, when he does not think his own conversation will be of use to them. But the characteristic activity in which we see Prodicus engaged is to pare down meanings of words into smaller and smaller pieces He would no doubt endorse the translation decision made here to use "audacity" instead of "daring" in the discussion of courage, and he would probably make further distinctions to rule out the kinds of audacity that discussion exposes as inappropriate to courage. If Socrates is looking for definitions, and if definition means narrowing down a group of words until it precisely fits the meaning of some single word, then Prodicus is the person Socrates always ought to be talking to. The difficulties that stymie the people he prefers talking to could be avoided, and a whole dictionary full of answers to what-is questions could be compiled. No philosophic activity would ever be required, and everything would be settled on the level of words.

If it is obvious by now that the negative results Socrates gets out of his discussions are more worthwhile than that kind of success, then it appears that the discrepancies words disclose between their meanings and the things they are intended to name are their most valuable property. From this point of view, Socrates is always deliberately pushing the effort to find definitions to the point at which it breaks down, in order to stimulate a new way of looking at the things our words name. It was noted earlier that in the *Cratylus* (432A-433B) Socrates makes the point that names are not like numbers. A number cannot be what it is if anything is missing or added, but a name, Socrates argues, is not meant to be an exact match for the attributes of the thing named. A name does its job, he says, by conveying a general impression (*tupos*) of the thing named, and it may do this better or worse but never perfectly. Why not? Socrates argues that anything that corresponded in every respect to the thing named would not be a name at all, but another instance

of what is named. To understand why he is so insistent about this, one must, I think, get a sense of the *Cratylus* as a whole. The discussion in the dialogue arises out of a difference of opinion between two people who take Socrates into their common endeavor in the hope of moving it forward. What is their dispute about? A distinction is maintained throughout the dialogue between speech (*logos*), and its smallest part (385C), a name (*onoma*). The smallest *logos* would be a sentence combining a noun and a verb (431B-C). A verb is a name too (426E), even though the general word for name is also used for nouns as distinct from verbs. The word *onoma* at the heart of it all is already an instance of the sort of mismatch Socrates claims is inherent to all names. A verb goes beyond the function of a name when it is used to say something about something else. When the meaning of the verb is singled out as the focus of attention, for which English normally uses a gerund and ancient Greek an infinitive, it is treated as a name. Similarly, many of the names discussed in the *Cratylus* are adjectives treated as substantives, and at least one (*lian*) is an adverb (415C). None are prepositions or pronouns, but there is no reason in principle why any of them could not be taken as names. There might at times be reason to extract the *in* or the *what* from a phrase or a sentence to focus on its own naming function. All the "parts of speech" in the technical sense are parts of the *logos*, and *legein*, or speaking, is putting meanings together. Each such meaning that enters into speech depends on a prior act of naming, and it is that act (*onomazein*) which determines what an *onoma* is. And Socrates says what naming is in 388B-C, on the basis of an analogy to weaving.

To get the force of the analogy, we need to be careful about the names Socrates uses. All the other English translations known to me lose the analogy altogether by rendering *kerkizein* as "weave." Socrates in fact uses forms of the word *huphainein* when he is speaking of the whole process of weaving, and seems to use *kerkizein* for a certain preliminary stage or partial aspect of it, and he makes the act of naming analogous to that part or facet of weaving. Socrates explains the meaning of *kerkizein* as disentangling the intermingled threads of the warp and woof. The threads need to be combed, or separated out, in order that they can be interwoven, and held separate while they are being interwoven. Using the precise terms of the analogy, Socrates says that naming is the disentangling of being, or of things by their capacities. The fourth term of the proportion is not stated in that passage, but the dialogue supplies it later: combing is to weaving as naming is to speaking. The woven cloth is the *logos*, described by Socrates at 425A as organized out of names into something great, beautiful, and whole. What speech puts together must first be taken apart, and that taking apart is naming. What Prodicus does in making fine distinctions is to dwell on the separating as an end in itself, as though that secured wisdom: once we see exactly what the namer was naming, we have the knowledge and power to use speech expertly. But at 421A-B of the *Cratylus*, Socrates claims that what it means to be named is to be something for which there is a quest. Naming something does not find what it is, but begins an inquiry that requires putting back together what names have put asunder. We are now in a position to see what is at stake in the dispute

between the two people with whom Socrates discusses naming. Hermogenes claims that all names are merely conventional, so that whatever anyone calls anything is right (384D). Cratylus claims that everything has a name that is right by nature, while anything else it may be called is just meaningless noise (430A), so that he too concludes, for every utterance that deserves to be called a name, that all names are right (430E). Whether because names are arbitrary or because they are direct signposts to the nature of things, the two men agree that names can never be wrong. Socrates, we have seen, claims that all names are always wrong, because the act of naming is inherently incomplete. Whenever he asks what something is, he is inviting someone to go back to the stance of the namer and look at whatever the namer had his eye on; using the name without asking the what-is question takes our eyes off the sight that gave rise to the act of naming.

What is this seeing? Socrates describes it first by comparing the maker of a name to a carpenter who makes a shuttle (389A-E), the tool for combing and disentangling threads on the weaver's loom. *Socrates* names the thing to which the carpenter looks an *eidos*, what a shuttle itself is, that which would be of such a nature as to comb threads on a loom. Particular shuttles would differ because there are also *eidê* or forms of the activity of weaving, meant for wool or linen, light or thick cloth, and so on, but the various shuttles would share a single look (*idea*). And since their shapes would be different, that look cannot be one that is seen by any bodily eye or in any visual image. At 390E, Socrates shifts the word for looking-at (*blepein*) to one meaning looking-away-from (*apoblepein*), to capture this kind of seeing, but looking away is not meant to replace looking at something or to succeed it in time, but to coincide with it. It is not a special act of carpenters, name givers, and philosophers that Socrates is talking about, but an attribute that belongs to all human seeing and makes it different from animal sensing. At 399C, Socrates claims that the name giver who called us human beings was calling attention to the fact that our seeing is always a looking into, gathering up, and observing of what we see, rather than a passive registering of sensory data. The direct perceptual experience of human beings is already double, always simultaneously looking at the changing particulars and away toward what they are. The latter is what Socrates calls, at 393D, the *being* of them, what holds steady amid the change, to which the namer is always giving the name. For this reason, the twofoldness of human seeing carries over into speech. Socrates makes this step when he speaks of the god Hermes and his son Pan (407E-408D). He calls Hermes the contriver or father of speech, and likens the dual nature of speech to that of Hermes' other son. Pan is smooth and divine in his upper half, shaggy and goatish below, uniting in his person the realms of gods and humans. Speech, like its father, interprets and carries messages between the two realms, and this introduces the possibility of falsehood and deception. If the human realm is to any extent in flux, and the meanings of names are at rest, falsehood and deception are the inevitable lot of anyone who trusts in names alone or in shifting appearances alone. But the double vision that takes in both together is always available as a place to turn for anyone who wants to try to reconcile what they reveal.

If this sounds familiar, that is because we found something very similar when we tried to see what this group of dialogues had to say about sophists. We started from a general framework suggested by remarks in the *Cratylus* about Protagoras and Euthydemus. But there are also four other direct references to sophists in the *Cratylus*. Socrates says that the best way to find out about names would be to pay the sophists to tell us (391B-C); when he tries to expound the meanings of names himself, with the aid of a wisdom that has taken possession of him through his ears, he says he and his two hearers will need to have that wisdom cleansed out of them the next day by a priest or sophist (396D-397A). His account of the origin of the ancient word "hero" claims that the name was meant to apply to rhetoricians and sophists (398D-E). And in his final use of the name, Socrates gives an example of "a perfect sophist": Hades, the god of the dead (403E). His explanation is that the souls of the dead would return to life if they were not held enthralled in his realm by the enchantment of his beautiful speeches. The wording is reminiscent of his description in the *Protagoras* (314E-315B) of *that* sophist's effect on his followers. In that passage, Protagoras is compared to Orpheus, who also cast a spell over the inhabitants of Hades' realm, in an unsuccessful attempt to bring his wife Eurydice back from the dead. To be enchanted or spellbound may sometimes be a good thing, but it always involves having one's critical faculties suspended. The many references to sophists in the *Cratylus* may be intended to point to a sophistry that is present in speech itself, and particularly in names. About the purpose served by names, Socrates says first that they are for teaching, but he soon shifts to saying that their proper use is for asking and answering questions in a process of dialectic (388B-C, 390C). If there is a temptation to accept names as teaching us the way things are, and not to appropriate them for questioning the way things are, the double vision that looks into what is seen and away to what can be named has been lost. Prodicus makes money by teaching people the right way to use names. And Cratylus is so strongly under the spell of names that he believes every name is right and has an exact correspondence with something in the nature of things. Cratylus, then, the title character of the dialogue, would be the one who displays the danger of listening to the siren song of names so trustingly that he puts himself and his soul at the mercy of names to provide for his well-being (440C).

But Cratylus is a puzzling character. From beginning to end of the dialogue we hear from Hermogenes and from Cratylus himself that he believes in the natural rightness of names, including, we learn, the name *beautiful* itself and the name *good* itself (439C-D). But he also holds and will not give up the opinion that Heracleitus is right and all things are in motion and flux (436E-437A, 440D-E). There is something discordant (cf. 433B) about the two places in which Cratylus plants himself so firmly at the same time, since one of them seems to assert and the other to deny that are such things *as* places to stand firm. It is true that Socrates in the *Republic* distinguishes the perceptible realm of becoming and change from an intelligible realm of stable being, but he says there that it is impossible for a human soul to be fixed on both at once

(508D); learning, he says, requires a turning around of the whole soul from becoming to being (518C-D). In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates says that if the truth of things is flux, then there is no truth in names (157A-C). In the *Cratylus* the two positions are apparently reconciled by the claim that the majority of names have a belief in the prevalence and goodness of flux built into them by the original givers of names. But this is so only because Socrates makes them come out that way. At 437A-C, Socrates gives a quick demonstration of the fact that he can also make them come out the opposite way. There is a tendency in some of the recent secondary literature to argue that Socrates intends the etymologies he offers in the dialogue seriously. But in the case of two of the names, Socrates says that his accounts will be playful, and Hermogenes will have to go to someone else for serious ones (406B-C). And we have seen that he attributes his display of sophist-like expertise about names to an outside source of inspiration that will have to be purged the next day from him and from everyone who hears him. I am willing to take him at his word and not take any of his words about names at face value. One undeniable effect of the piling up of Heracleitean etymologies is that it makes the discussion congenial to Cratylus and eventually draws him into it. In the *Meno*, Socrates rouses Meno's interest with a myth about recollection from a previous life (81A-D), and later casually claims that all he meant by recollection was reasoning about causes (98A). And the *Theaetetus* passage just mentioned comes at the end of an elaborate theory Socrates concocts to save the doctrine of flux, an effort that rouses the intense interest of Theodorus (161A), whom Socrates repeatedly tries to draw into *that* discussion. The myth of recollection, the theory that the appearance of stillness is an illusion resulting from a collision of faster and slower motions, and the compilation of Heracleitean etymologies are all preliminary moves to attract particular people into a position from which dialectic can begin.

The people whom Socrates works so hard to open up to questions and answers all have some special combination of opinions that is worth examining and bringing to light. Theodorus is a mathematician who loves the security of proofs, and believes that philosophy is useless because a human being is the measure of all things. Meno is a brutal opportunist who lives by the belief that human excellence is achieved by acquiring wealth and political power by any means, and who asks whether virtue can be taught, possibly because he feels morally superior to sophists. And Cratylus believes that the truth of the world around us is flux *and* that all names tell the truth about the nature of things. To put it negatively, Cratylus does not believe that the testimony of the senses *or* the testimony of names ever needs to be examined or corrected. A geographical metaphor in the passage about the perfect sophist has Hades detaining souls "there" when they are capable, if they so desire, of coming back "here" (403D-E). Our interpretation of that passage seems to make the sophistry of names detain Cratylus "there" among names, and keep him from returning "here" to the perceptible world of becoming. It may seem surprising that Socrates' complaint about the Heracleitean Cratylus is that he *neglects* the changing things around us. But Cratylus's turn to names is static and not

dialectical, while his belief in flux is an impression of things that he does not return to re-examine. It is as though he dwells simultaneously but separately in two distinct worlds, as if he were two Cratyluses, and this is the very image Socrates confronts him with at 432B-C. By taking names as exact matches for beings, Cratylus seems to have left the perceptible particulars trapped in an inescapable state of flux, while conferring on the beings named a similar isolation in their immobility. Socrates gives the odd warning that by identifying names too closely with being, Cratylus is like someone who strolls around Aegina late at night and gets home later than he needs to (433A-B). Aegina is very near Athens, but on an island; passage is readily available and cheap (as Socrates mentions at *Gorgias* 511D), but only by boat, and presumably someone who is too enchanted by being there to pay attention to the time could be stranded for the night. If Aegina corresponds to a static realm of names and Athens to the fluctuating realm of perception, it would be Hermes, the contriver of speech, who provides passage back and forth. What would happen to Cratylus if he missed the boat and got back "here" too late?

There may in fact be something prophetic of Cratylus's later life in Socrates' warning. We hear from Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* (1010a 10-15) that Cratylus ended up believing it was wrong to speak at all rather than just point, and that he out-Heracleitusized Heracleitus by saying it was impossible to step in the same river even once. Aristotle invents the verb *hêrakleitizein* and says that Cratylus eventually carried that condition to its farthest possible extreme. A 1951 article by G. S. Kirk in the American Journal of Philology called "The Problem of Cratylus" reports that generations of scholars had worried so much about the difference between the man in the dialogue and the one described by Aristotle that they had conjectured variously that he never really believed in the rightness of names and Plato made that up; or that Plato amalgamated Cratylus's beliefs with those of some other person or just borrowed his name for someone else; or that Cratylus really did believe in the rightness of names but as a source of magical power rather than knowledge or as a merely Protagorean rightness for the appearance of the moment. That article inspired another three years later in the same journal with the same title by D. J. Allan, who conjectured that Cratylus's belief in flux eventually spread like an infection to kill off his belief in names. But the root of Cratylus's "problem," according to Socrates' diagnosis, is his unwillingness to accept the mismatch between names and things; his prognosis that Cratylus could be dragged down into the whirlpool (439C) would account for both his loss of faith in speech and the spiraling beyond all bounds of his Heracleitusizing. The purity and finality that Cratylus imputes to names lets them teach a doctrine, but renders them useless for asking the questions that would test that doctrine or for answering any that would find something to hold on to in the world we live in. The Cratylus we meet in the dialogue is already at one dead end, because he believes in the finality and rightness of the names his language happens to have given him. The story we hear from Aristotle tells us he ended up at another dead end, not only passive in the face of appearances but paralyzed by them, powerless to do anything but point. Socrates' images

tell us that his extreme faith in names strands him on an island disconnected from his experience, makes him two Cratyluses, and dooms him to end up swept away by a whirlpool.

The split within Cratylus mirrors the split we have explored between the two branches of sophistry. Euthydemus exploited one side, which we can now trace back to an abuse of names. If a name like *learning* is used two ways, Euthydemus can get two opposite conclusions out of it and treat them both as final. We saw how that particular dilemma was superseded by Socrates in the *Apology* through a new act of naming that united the two senses of learning in a single conception. In the face of such dilemmas of language and logic various responses are possible, and we have seen a different one from Prodicus. He is not concerned with winning victories in contests, but with straightening out the use of names by making finer distinctions. His approach is benign where that of Euthydemus is perverse, but they both belong to the same branch of sophistry, which draws conclusions from the meanings of words alone and takes them as final. The Socratic approach intervenes at the origin of words, and initiates a philosophic appropriation of the act of naming. On the other side of the split, Protagoras exploited the power of appearances by treating *them* as final, and we can now be a little clearer about what appearances are. When, near the beginning of the *Cratylus* (385E-386A), Socrates asks Hermogenes if he agrees with Protagoras that a human being is the measure of all things, he interprets that to mean that all things are as they *appear* privately to each person in sense perception. But he also uses the same word to ask Hermogenes whether it *appears* to him that things are the way Protagoras claims. It is in the latter sense that the word *appear* is used over and over and over again subsequently throughout the dialogue. The private act of mere sensing is what Socrates later calls animal seeing (399C); he names a human being as one who observes, that is, looks into and gathers up what he sees. "Gather up" translates *analogizesthai*, which could also mean taking up into a *logos*. In the opening line of the dialogue, Hermogenes asks Cratylus whether they should make their *logos* a common endeavor (*anakoinousthai ton logon*) with Socrates. And when Socrates asks Hermogenes whether it appears to him that Protagoras is right about appearances, he also says "let *us* see" whether it appears that way to you. The relevant sense of appearance in the dialogue is one that already includes, within perceiving, judgments and opinions that take the thing perceived up into a *logos* which can be made a common endeavor with other people. Protagoras's skill is to make *that* sort of appearance seem final, when it could be the beginning of a discussion. Socrates' response to sophistry of Euthydemus's kind is to put meanings together in new acts of naming; his response to Protagorean sophistry is to return to the thinking and seeing that are already held together in human perceiving, put appearances of that sort together into a *logos*, and bring human beings together to discuss them.

The making of a *logos* was likened early in the *Cratylus* to interweaving the threads that the act of naming had disentangled. But when do we have a sturdy enough collection of names to form the warp of the fabric? Or a full enough and flexible enough supply to form the woof or weft? According to

Socrates, the answer seems to be, never. If names and the things they name never match, the reasoned accounts we weave out of them must propagate those initial errors. But one of the merits of a dialectical approach is its capacity to expose such errors. The fallibility of its resources does not disqualify the *logos* as a medium for inquiry, but only means that the use of it to put an end to inquiry will always be sophistical. The business of Protagoras and Euthydemus is to put an end to inquiry, not only directly, the former by making one opinion strong enough to drive out all competitors, the latter by checkmating any attempt to defend any opinion; experience with the sophists makes people feel that any opinion is as good as any other, and that no logical demonstration can be trusted. It is only the first-hand experience of dialectical learning that can show anyone that fallibility is not the same thing as futility. Plato did not write treatises, but his dialogues inspire philosophic activity by drawing us into rivalry with the characters in those dialogues, not excluding Socrates. Once launched into that activity, we have no need for anyone to persuade us that it is possible or satisfying. But can we be assured at least that the connections made by the *logos* itself, once they have been examined and tested, can produce conclusions known with finality and certainty? The little bit we found of Plato's unwritten teachings suggests that it is not only names that are inevitably faulty but also the ways our speech puts those names together. Jacob Klein, in the lecture "Speech, Its Strength and Its Weaknesses," in the book *Lectures and Essays* (St. John's College Press, 1985), points to the discussion of motion, rest, and being in the *Sophist* as evidence that speech itself will always insist on saying things that come from its own structure rather than that of the things it speaks about. There is no way to prevent the temptation to say that being is a third thing, different from motion and rest, and that each of them *is*; it's only logical. And, we may add, it seems decidedly illogical to claim that courage cannot be separated from the other virtues and defined by its differences from them. Socrates says in the *Cratylus* that speech cannot help being like its father Hermes, who carries messages between the human and non-human realms, and he is thievish and deceptive (407E-408A). But an active user of speech, who keeps his wits about him and is not enchanted by names or grammar, can make the same journeys Hermes does, back and forth between speech and perception, with an eye always on the evidence by which appearances and assertions can be measured.

A human being may turn out to *be* the measure of all things, according to Socrates, if we rightly understand what makes us human. It is the sophists who seek to trap us on the mainland of shifting appearances or the island of static meanings. Human perceiving always has both in view together, and it is in that union of motion and rest that the experienced world has its stability and the intelligible world its life. The eidetic number hypothesis seems first and foremost to be a way of declaring that this unity of the perceptible and intelligible is at the foundation of all things, and extends to everything of which an account can be given. It is amusing to reflect that a standard interpretation of Plato solemnly informs us that he believed in a separate world of forms where everything is static perfection, to which the philosopher flees because

everything in this world is a hopeless mess. If there is anything to our way of reading the four dialogues included here, the only philosopher to whom the standard interpretation would apply is Cratylus, and the doctrine the interpreters attribute to Plato is what Plato himself exposes as the foundation of all sophistry. The plainest evidence of appearances alone may still need to be measured by an attempt to say what courage is, and that question may reveal that there is much more to it than there appeared to be. All the virtues might be so tightly interwoven in its texture that separating it out from them would destroy it. And the simplest logical implications of the meanings of learning may leave out the most important kind of learning, which can be brought to sight only when one finds the standpoint from which its opposite forms are recognized as interwoven in one whole. And once that kind of learning is understood, the very possibility of teachers who are wholly knowers and learners who are simply ignorant may fall apart. Knowledge and ignorance might be as inseparable as motion and rest.

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My earlier translations of dialogues of Plato have been results of a lifetime of thinking and rethinking. The *Theaetetus*, *Republic*, and *Gorgias* are works that stayed close to my heart and central to my studies since I first encountered them as a student. The project embodied in this book has been a journey of discovery. I had only a nodding acquaintance with the four dialogues included here until it occurred to me to wonder why they all in some way connected the theme of sophistry with references to eidetic numbers. Unexpected juxtapositions of topic and theme of this sort have often opened the way for me to the most important things I have learned from reading Plato, and I have not been disappointed this time. But that does not mean that you should trust anything said in this introduction. It is always risky to base an interpretation of one dialogue on evidence found in others, since each dialogue follows a dialectical path dependent upon the people who take part in it. There is also risk involved in allowing one preconceived set of questions to determine an interpretation of any book. There are parts of these dialogues that I have not touched on at all, and if any of this unexplored content were given the attention it deserves, everything else might need to be rethought. In any case, it is impossible to respond in kind to a Platonic dialogue or to an introduction that argues the things this one does without taking their content in your own directions. These are occasions when divergence is a sign of agreement rather than the reverse.

My debt to Jacob Klein is abundantly evident in these pages, but it is even greater than the explicit citations reveal. Klein came to St. John's College almost at the same time that the founders of its program of studies reintroduced the classical liberal arts curriculum, and by his example he taught generations of faculty and students how to get through the doorway of a Platonic dialogue. That way in involves trusting the philosophic impulse as the living center of all learning worthy of the name. If the college that started me and thousands of others on the path of learning ever stops encouraging that trust, it will have

lost touch with the source of all its distinction. Another debt of gratitude that I cannot overstate is to Eric Salem, who has once again read through all these translations, in two cases checking them word by word against the Greek, and he has been generous with his wide knowledge and wise judgment. I have not followed all his suggestions, but a great many of them have made this a better book and saved it from numerous errors. Several people have been kind enough to read the introduction and give me the benefit of their thoughts. Among them is Burt Hopkins of Seattle University, whose book on Jacob Klein's work will soon be published by Indiana University Press. That book, *The Origin of the Logic of Symbolic Mathematics*, will be the first comprehensive evaluation of Klein's study of the transition from ancient to modern mathematics, and of its relation to the writings of Edmund Husserl. It was in the course of Klein's work on mathematics that he recovered the notion of eidetic numbers, and it is Burt Hopkins who has recovered that recovery and demonstrated its importance. My ongoing conversations with Burt inspired the project that forms this book, and he has helped me make a number of things in this introduction more accurate. Another book of his, *The Philosophy of Husserl*, soon to be brought out by Acumen Publishing, situates the thinking of that philosopher against the background of classical philosophy, and it too gives a detailed account of the eidetic-number hypothesis. And if there are unclarities in the way this introduction is written, that is not the fault of Michael Dink or Mary Hannah Jones, both of whom have helped me make it as clear as its content and my own capacity permit.

All four dialogues have been translated from the editions in the Oxford Classical Texts edited by John Burnet, and first published early in the 20th century, although the *Cratylus* is also available now in a newer edition in the OCT series. The standard pagination from the Stephanus edition of Plato's works has been included throughout for easy reference. That edition had multiple volumes, with the page numbers starting over in each, so passages need to be identified by the dialogue title as well as the Stephanus page. The index refers to passages by their Stephanus numbers, preceded by the initial letter of the dialogue's title; the letters following those numbers indicate page divisions. A brief outline has been supplied at the beginning of each dialogue, to make it easier to find your way to particular passages. This introduction records one journey through these texts. It is by no means intended to replace or supersede any way through them that you make for yourself. Once you are launched into reading the dialogues, Plato's own playfulness and seriousness will be the only guides you need.

Annapolis, Maryland
Fall, 2009

Note added in proof: Thanks to Edward Halper, this book has begun a dialogue even before its publication. He has rightly pointed out to me that most of the connections I trace here between sophistry and eidetic numbers have their origins in the notion of the "indeterminate dyad," the primal duality Plato posited as underlying the very possibility of number.

PROTAGORAS

Outline of the dialogue

309A-314C Socrates describes to a companion the way he was awakened before dawn by Hippocrates, a young man full of excitement at hearing that Protagoras is in town, and how they filled the time until a more respectable hour discussing what Hippocrates thought he could learn from Protagoras.

314C-316A Socrates and Hippocrates arrive at Callias's house and view Protagoras, Hippias, and Prodicus, the three sophists staying there, amid their groups of followers.

316A-320C Socrates questions Protagoras about what he claims to offer his students. He claims to teach virtue. Socrates doubts that this is possible, and asks for an explanation.

320C-328D Protagoras obliges by telling the assembled crowd a story about Prometheus and Epimetheus, and concludes with an argument about why a teacher like himself is needed.

328D-334C Socrates questions Protagoras about the virtues. Do they form a single whole, and if so are they related like parts of a face or parts of gold? What in particular are the relations between justice and piety, wisdom and moderation, and moderation and justice? Protagoras replies with increasing reluctance until he finally bursts out with a speech about the impossibility of pinning down any single meaning of the good. The crowd applauds.

334C-338E Prominent members of the gathering, including Socrates' young friend Alcibiades who happens to be present, deliberate about how to keep a discussion going between Socrates and Protagoras. They come up with a compromise and prevail on Protagoras to agree to it. They will stick to asking and answering questions, but Protagoras will ask and Socrates will answer.

338E-348C Protagoras asks whether the poet Simonides contradicts himself in an ode Socrates knows well. As soon as he gets Socrates to say there is no contradiction, Protagoras quickly displays an apparent one, to the delight of the crowd. Socrates pretends to need help from Prodicus about the meanings of words, when in fact Protagoras has merely overlooked the distinction between becoming good and being good. Socrates then makes a speech of great length and complexity to save the poet's consistency, only to conclude that serious people would be better off discussing their own opinions than criticizing or defending those of poets. Protagoras is shamed into resuming answering questions from the point at which he had earlier broken off the discussion of the wholeness of virtue.

348C-351B Protagoras claims that courage is very different from the other virtues and independent of them. Socrates asks about the relation of courage to audacity and to wisdom.

351B-358D Socrates asks about the relation of pleasure and the good, and whether being overcome by pleasure is a failure of knowledge. He gains the explicit agreement of Protagoras, Hippias, and Prodicus that it is.

358D-360E Socrates gradually compels Protagoras to back down from his claim that courage is independent of wisdom, though Protagoras still believes that.

360E-end Socrates points out that Protagoras's reluctance to connect courage and knowledge calls in question his claim that virtue is teachable, while his own eagerness to connect them undercuts his own inclination to believe that it is not teachable. Socrates is ready to reopen that question, but Protagoras politely but firmly refuses. Socrates leaves.

309A *Companion*: Where are you appearing from, Socrates? Oh, it's obvious, though; from the hunt after the youthful allure of Alcibiades, right? When I saw him the other day, he appeared to me too to be still beautiful as a man, that's for sure—quite a man, Socrates, speaking between ourselves, even with his beard filled out now.

B *Socrates*: Well, what of it? Aren't you a fan of Homer, who said youth is at its most graceful in one who's just gotten his beard, which is the stage Alcibiades is at now?

Companion: So what's going on now? Are you appearing from beside him? And how is the young fellow disposed toward you?

Socrates: Well disposed, it seemed to me, and not least so on this very day, for he said a lot on my behalf, taking up for me—as a matter of fact I'm coming from him right now. I want to tell you something strange, though: even with him present, I paid no attention to him and often forgot he was there.

C *Companion*: What could have happened with you and him that was such a serious matter? Surely you didn't meet up with anyone else more beautiful, not in this city anyway.

Socrates: I did, very much so.

Companion: What are you saying? A townsman or a foreigner?

Socrates: A foreigner.

Companion: From whereabouts?

Socrates: Abdera.

Companion: And this foreigner seemed to you to be someone so beautiful as to appear more beautiful to you than the son of Cleinias?

Socrates: How could the wisest thing not appear more beautiful, you blessed fellow?

Companion: So, Socrates, you're here with us from meeting up with some wise person?

D *Socrates*: Probably the wisest person of the present day, if it seems to you that the wisest one is Protagoras.

Companion: Oh! What do you mean? Is Protagoras in town?
Socrates: Already his third day here.
Companion: And so you've come right now from having been in his presence?
Socrates: Very much so, and from having said and listened to many things. **310A**
Companion: Well, why don't you go through the conversation for us, unless something prevents you? Sit right here, make this slave here get up.
Socrates: Very well; in fact I'll look on it as a favor if you folks listen.
Companion: And we'll certainly feel the same way toward you if you tell it.
Socrates: That would be a double favor. Just listen, then.

When last night had passed, but still well before dawn, Hippocrates, the son of Apollodorus and brother of Phason, knocked very **B** forcefully on my door with his walking-stick, and when someone opened up for him, he came rushing straight in, and speaking in a loud voice, said "Socrates, are you awake or asleep?" And I recognized his voice and said "Hippocrates, that's you. You're not bringing some news, are you?" "None but good news," he said. "Then you'd do well to tell it," I said; "what is it, and what's your purpose in coming at such a time?"

"*Protagoras*," he said, standing next to me; "he's here." "Yes, since day before yesterday," I said; "have you just found out?" "Just in the evening, for gods' sake!" he said, while he was groping around **C** for my couch, and he sat down by my feet and said: "Very late in the evening, in fact, when I got back from Oenoe, because my slave Satyrus ran off—oh and when I was going to tell you that I'd be chasing him, something else distracted me. But when I came back and we'd had dinner and were about to turn in, that's when my brother tells me Protagoras has come. Even then I started to go straight to you, but then it seemed to me to be too far into the night, but as soon **D** as sleep had relieved me of fatigue, I got right up and made my way here like this."

And noticing his forcefulness and excitement, I said "What's that got to do with you? Protagoras hasn't done you any wrong, has he?" And he laughed and said "By gods he has, Socrates! Because he's wise all by himself and doesn't make me that way." "Yes he will, by Zeus," I said, "if you give him money and persuade him to, he'll make you wise too." "Oh, Zeus and gods," he said, "if it would only depend on **E** that, I wouldn't spare anything of my own or my friends. But it's for these very reasons that I've come to you now, for you to talk to him for me. Because I'm too young, and on top of that I've never even seen Protagoras or heard him at all; I was still a little boy when he came to town before. But everybody praises the man, Socrates, and claims he's the wisest at speaking. So why don't we walk over to him, so we

311A can catch him indoors? He's putting up at Callias's place, Hipponicus' son, so I've heard. So let's go."

And I said "Let's not go there yet, good fellow—it's early—but let's get up and go into the courtyard; we'll pass the time by walking around in it until it gets light. Then we'll go. For Protagoras spends most of his time indoors, so have courage. We'll most likely catch him in."

After that we got up and went around in the courtyard. And to try
B out Hippocrates' strength, I started to test him, asking him "Tell me, Hippocrates, you're making an effort now to go to Protagoras and pay him money as a fee on your own behalf; what's your idea? Who will you be going to and what will you become? Just as, if you were proposing to go to your namesake Hippocrates, the one from Cos, one of the Asclepiads, to pay *him* money as a fee on your own behalf, what would you answer if someone asked you, 'Tell me, Hippocrates,
C you're going to pay Hippocrates a fee because he's what?'" "I'd say because he's a doctor," he said. "'So that you'd become what?'" "A doctor," he said. "But if you were intending to go to Polycleitus the Argive or Pheidias the Athenian to pay them a fee on your own behalf, what would you answer if someone asked you, 'You have the idea of paying this money to Polycleitus and Pheidias because they're what?'" "I'd say because they're sculptors." "'So that you yourself would become what?'" "Obviously a sculptor."

D "Okay," I said, "so now, when you and I go to Protagoras, we'll be prepared to pay him money as a fee on your behalf, if our resources are sufficient and we persuade him by means of them, and if not we'll use up our friends' resources too. So if, when we're so exceedingly eager, what should we answer someone who asks us, 'Tell me, Socrates and Hippocrates, you fellows have the idea of paying money
E to Protagoras because he's what?' What other name do we hear spoken about Protagoras, the same way 'sculptor' is about Pheidias and 'poet' about Homer—what do we hear like that about Protagoras?" "Well, Socrates, what people *say*, anyway, is that the man is a sophist," he said. "Therefore we're going there to pay him money because he's a sophist?" "Definitely." "So if someone asked you the further question
312A about this, too, 'Then you're going to Protagoras so you yourself will become what?'" And he spoke, turning red—for a bit of day was just breaking, so he became clearly visible—and said "If it's anything like the previous cases, it's obviously so I'll become a sophist." "*You*," I said; "before the gods, wouldn't you be ashamed to hold yourself out among the Greeks as a sophist?" "By Zeus, yes, Socrates, if I really have to say what I think."

"Well then, Hippocrates, maybe you're assuming the learning
B you'll get from Protagoras won't be of that sort, but the sort that came from your writing teacher, your harp teacher, or your athletic trainer, is that it? Because with each of these, you didn't learn something for

the sake of an art, as if you were going to be a professional, but for the sake of an education, as befits a private person and a free man."[1] "The learning one gets from Protagoras seems to me to be more of that sort," he said, "very much so."

"So do you know what you're going to be doing now, or does it escape your notice?" I said. "In what connection?" "That you're about to entrust your own soul to the care of a man who is, as you claim, a **C** sophist, but I'd be surprised if you know what in the world a sophist *is*. Yet if you're ignorant of this, you don't know what you're turning your soul over to, or whether to a good or a bad thing." "Well, I think I know," he said. "Speak up, then: what do you consider a sophist to be?" "I'd say he's just what the name says," he said: "someone who knows wise things." "No doubt it's possible," I said, "to say that about painters and carpenters too, that they're people who know wise things, but if someone were to ask us, 'Among wise things, what is **D** it that painters are knowers of?' we'd tell him, presumably, that it's of things related to the producing of likenesses, and so on with the others. But if someone asked this: 'And the sophist? What among the wise things is he a knower of?' What should we reply to him? What sorts of work is he in charge of?"

"What should we say he is, Socrates? Someone in charge of making a person formidable at speaking?" "Well, maybe we'd be telling the truth," I said, "but not enough of it, because our answer still leaves out the question of what it is a sophist makes a person formidable at speaking about. Presumably a harp-teacher likewise makes a person **E** formidable at speaking about the very thing he also knows, namely harp-playing, right?" "Yes." "Okay, so then what does a sophist make a person formidable at speaking about?" "Is it clear that it's about the very thing he also knows?" "Likely so. So what is this that the sophist is a knower of himself and also makes his pupil a knower?" "By Zeus," he said, "I no longer have anything to tell you."

And after that I said, "What about it then? Do you know what **313A** sort of risk you're getting yourself into by putting your soul at stake? If you had to entrust your body to someone, running the risk that it would become either sound or unsound, you would consider carefully from many angles whether it should be entrusted or not, and call in the advice of friends and relatives while investigating the matter for

1 A number of words in this speech are worth noting: a writing teacher (*grammatistês*) was someone skilled at reading and writing; a harp teacher (*kitharistês*) was skilled at playing a small stringed instrument somewhat comparable to our guitars; an art (*technê*) was any kind of know-how involving some theoretical knowledge, some manual skill, and a facility acquired by practice; a professional (*dêmiourgos*) practiced an art for anyone who would pay; eduation (*paideia*) referred not to training of any kind but to a preparation for a good life; and a free man (*eleutheros*) was someone who was not only not the slave of a master but not bound by the need to earn a living. Sophists were traveling teachers who claimed to provide, for money, an education, rather than a training in any art.

a good many days. But when it comes to your soul, something you regard more highly than your body—and the good or bad outcome of everything of yours rests on whether *it* becomes sound or unsound—in
B this case you don't consult your father or your brother or any of your companions about whether or not your soul ought to be entrusted to this foreigner who's come here. But after you heard about him in the evening, as you say, you come at the break of dawn, have no discussion or deliberation about this matter of whether you should entrust yourself to him or not, and you're ready to spend your own money and that of your friends, as though you'd already determined that it's necessary at all costs to get together with Protagoras, whom, as
C you claim, you neither know nor ever had a conversation with, and whom you call by the name of 'sophist,' while it plainly appears that you don't know what in the world a sophist is, though you're about to entrust yourself to one—is that it?" And he, having listened, said "So it seems, Socrates, from the things you're saying."

"Well, Hippocrates, isn't the sophist in fact a sort of merchant or dealer in commodities from which a soul is nourished? He appears to me to be something of that sort." "But Socrates, what is a soul nourished by?" "By learnable things, presumably," I said. "And make sure, my friend, that the sophist doesn't deceive us when he praises the things he offers for sale, the way the merchant and dealer do about
D nourishment for the body. For doubtless they have no knowledge themselves of what's sound or unsound among the the commodities they bring to market, but they praise everything they offer for sale, and those who buy from them have no knowledge of it either, unless one of them happens to be a fitness expert or a doctor. And in the same way, those who carry the learnable things around from city to city, as dealers offering them up for sale, praise everything they have for sale to the one who desires them at any moment; but it's probable, you best of men, that some of these too are ignorant of what among
E the things they offer for sale is sound or unsound for the soul. And it's the same way too with those who buy from them, unless one of them happens to have the skill of a doctor, in this case about the soul. So if you happen to be someone who knows what among these things is sound or unsound, it's safe for you to buy learnable things from Protagoras or from anyone else whatever; if not, though, you
314A blessed one, see that you don't roll the dice and take a risk with the most precious things. For as a matter of fact, the risk in the buying of learnable things is much greater than in the buying of food. For when food and drink are purchased from the dealer or merchant, it's possible to carry them off in separate containers, and before admitting them into the body by drinking or eating, it's possible to put them away at home in order to get advice by calling upon someone who understands what should be eaten or drunk and what not, and how
B much and when, so that there's no great risk in buying them. But

with learnable things, there's no such thing as carrying one off in a separate container, but once one has handed over the price and taken the learnable thing into the soul itself and learned it, it's necessary to go away either harmed or benefited. So let's consider these things with our elders too, since we are still young to be making a decision on so great a matter. For now, though, just as we planned, let's go and listen to the man, and then when we've heard him let's take counsel with others, since Protagoras is not the only one at that very place, but **C** Hippias the Elean is there too, and so, I believe, is Prodicus of Ceos, and lots of other wise men as well."

This seemed a good plan to us, and we made our way there. But when we came into the front courtyard, we stood there having a discussion of some line of argument that had overtaken us on the road, and so that we wouldn't leave it unfinished, but would go inside having completed it, we went on discussing it while standing there in the forecourt until we'd come to agreement with each other. And it seems to me that the doorkeeper, a eunuch, was listening to us, and most likely he was fed up with the constant arrivals at the house by **D** the multitude of sophists; anyway, when we knocked on the door, he opened up and said "Oh great, some sophists! He's not free," and with that, using both hands, he slammed the door very energetically, as hard as he could. And we knocked again, and he answered through the locked door, saying "*Guys*,[2] didn't you hear that he's not free?" "My good fellow," I said, "we haven't come to see Callias and we're not sophists. Get a grip on yourself! I assure you we've come because **E** we need to see Protagoras, so announce us." Grudgingly, then, the guy opened up the door for us.

When we got in, we came upon Protagoras walking back and forth in the colonnaded passageway, and walking back and forth with him, lined up on one side were Callias the son of Hipponicus and his brother by the same mother, Paralus the son of Pericles, and **315A** Charmides the son of Glaucon, while on his other side were another of Pericles' sons, Xanthippus, and Philippides the son of Philomelus, and Antimoerus of Mende, the one who's the most highly regarded of Protagoras's pupils and is learning his art in order to be a sophist. The greater part of those who were following along behind listening to what was said appeared to be foreigners—Protagoras brings them along from each of the cities he passes through, casting a spell over them with his voice just like Orpheus, while they trail after him **B** spellbound; and some of the local inhabitants were also in the choral

2 Literally "human beings" (*anthropoi*), but used here as a term of contempt, and echoed by Socrates just below. The word *anthropos* is used with unusual frequency in this dialogue. To a contemporary of Plato, it would have been bound to recall Protagoras's celebrated saying, "a human being is the measure of all things." Protagoras is depicted below (at 328B or 333C, for instance), as unwilling to apply the radical relativism of that epigram to his own status among other human beings; this culminates at 352E.

dance. *I* was especially entertained at seeing how beautifully this chorus was taking care never to get in Protagoras's way or be in front of him, but when he and those beside him turned back, this audience somehow split expertly into two rows in perfect order on the one side and the other, and wheeling around in a circle they always fell back into place in the rear most beautifully.

C Next did I behold, as Homer says,[3] Hippias of Elis, sitting enthroned in the colonnade on the opposite side; sitting around him on benches were Eriximachus the son of Acumenus, Phaedrus the Myrrinusian, Andron the son of Androtion, and some foreigners, both countrymen of his and others. They appeared to be pressing Hippias with certain astronomical questions pertaining to nature and the celestial regions, while he, sitting on his throne, was passing judgment for each of them and going all through their questions.

D And Tantalus as well did I espy, for Prodicus of Ceos was in town too, you know, and he was in a certain room that Hipponicus used before as a storeroom, but now Callias, because of the multitude of people putting up at his place, had emptied it out and made it into a guest room for the foreigners. Prodicus, then, was still lying down, covered up in some sheepskins and blankets, and lots of them, as it appeared. Lying alongside him on couches nearby were Pausanias, the one from Cerameis, and with Pausanias was a youngster, still a **E** teenager, good and beautiful in his nature, I assume, and certainly very beautiful in appearance. I think I heard his name was Agathon, and I wouldn't be surprised if he happened to be Pausanias's sweetheart.[4] So there was this teenaged boy, and both Adeimantuses, the sons of Cepis and Leucolophidas, and some others appeared there as well. But what they were talking about, I was unable to learn from outside, even though I was constantly straining to listen to Prodicus—for he **316A** seems to me to be a man thoroughly wise and godlike—but due to the depth of his voice there was a sort of rumbling sound in the room that made what was said indistinct.

And just at the moment we came in, there entered close behind us Alcibiades, the beautiful one, as you assert and I am persuaded, and also Critias the son of Callaeschrus. So we came in that way, while still taking our time talking about some small matters, and when we'd **B** thoroughly looked into them, we went up to Protagoras, and I said, "Protagoras, we've really made it here to you, Hippocrates here and

3 *Odyssey* XI, 601, as Odysseus surveys the souls in Hades. The reference to Tantalus just below comes from a line in the *Odyssey* a little before this one.

4 The two appear also as a couple in Plato's *Symposium*; Agathon is celebrating winning a prize as a young tragic poet, and Pausanias gives a speech that embodies the conventional opinion of his time about sexual attachments between older and younger men. The last portion of that dialogue also provides some perspective on the relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades, only one of whom thought it fit the conventional pattern.

I!" "Do you want to have a conversation with me alone," he said, "or along with the others as well?" "To us," I said, "it makes no difference; but when you've heard the purpose for which we came, consider it yourself." "And what is the purpose for which you came?" he said. "Hippocrates here is one of the local people, a son of Apollodorus, of a great and well-to-do household, and he himself, in his nature, seems to be a match for his age group. To me it seems that he has a **C** desire to get a good name in the city, and he thinks he'd get this most of all if he associates with you. So now in light of these things, you consider whether you think you ought to discuss them alone with us alone, or along with others."

"You are right to be circumspect[5] on my account, Socrates," he said. "For when a man goes as a foreigner into great cities and persuades the best of the young people in them to abandon the company of others, kinfolk and outsiders, older and younger, to be in his own company because they'll be the best they can be through their association with **D** him himself, it behooves him to be cautious in doing these things. For the jealousies that arise over them are not small, and there are even other sorts of hostilities and intrigues. I claim, though, that the sophistic art is an ancient one, but those men of ancient times who took it up, afraid of the antipathy for it, made a pretense and veiled themselves, in some cases in poetry, as with Homer, Hesiod, and Simonides, in others in mystic rites and oracular pronouncements, as with those surrounding Orpheus and Musaeus. I've noticed some certain ones even use fitness training, like Iccus of Tarentum, and one who's still around today and is no less a sophist, Herodicus of Selymbria, origi- **E** nally a Megarean. And your own Agathocles made music his pretense, though he was a great sophist, as were Pythocleides of Ceos and many others. All of these, as I say, being afraid of jealousy, used these arts as camouflage. But I refuse to be aligned with all these people in this **317A** matter, since I regard them as having failed to accomplish anything they wanted. For they didn't fool the people in their cities who had the power to act, on whose account those pretenses of theirs were made—most people, so to speak, don't notice anything anyway, but just sing whatever tune those others pass on to them. For someone who runs away to be unable to get away, but be conspicuous about it, is a great lack of intelligence in one who even makes the attempt, and **B** it's bound to make people much more hostile. For they regard such a person as being unscrupulous on top of everything else. So I've gone down a road totally opposite to that of those others. I acknowledge that I'm a sophist and that I give people an education, and I take this to be a better precautionary measure than that one, acknowledging

5 The verb means literally "to learn beforehand." It is the basis of the name of the mythical figure Prometheus, "the forethoughtful one." Beginning in 320C, Protagoras tells a story about Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus, "the one who learns his lesson after the fact."

it rather than being in denial. And I've taken other precautions in addition to that one, so as—I say it with a god listening—to suffer
C nothing dire as a result of admitting that I'm a sophist. And yet it's many years now that I'm in the practice of this art, for indeed my sum of years altogether is many—there's not one out of all of you who's of such an age that I could not be his father—so it's much the pleasantest thing for me, if it's something you folks want, to make my discourse on these things right in front of everyone who's in here."

And I—since I suspected that he wanted to show off for Prodicus
D and Hippias, and gloat over the fact that we'd come calling as lovers of his—said, "Then why don't we call Prodicus and Hippias and those with them to come in so they can listen to us?" "Quite so," Protagoras said. "So do you want us to set up for a seminar," Callias said, "so you folks can have your conversation sitting down?" It seemed good to do it that way, and since we were all delighted that we'd be listening to wise men, we pitched in and set up the benches and couches alongside Hippias ourselves, since the benches were over there already;
E and Callias and Alcibiades arrived at the spot supporting Prodicus between the two of them, having got him up on his feet from his couch, bringing those with Prodicus along too.

And when we'd all taken seats together, Protagoras said, "Now that these folks here are also present, Socrates, you might say what you were making mention of to me a little while ago on the youngster's
318A behalf." "The beginning of it for me is just the same as it was just now, Protagoras, and the reason I came. For Hippocrates here happens to be in desire of your company, so he says he'd be glad to find out what he'd get out of it if he associates with you. That's as far as *our* speech went." So taking up from there, Protagoras said, "Young man, it will assuredly be the case for you, if you associate with me, that on the day on which you come into association with me you'll go home having become better, and the same things will happen on the following day, and each day you'll make continual progress for the better."

B And hearing this, I said, "Protagoras, you're saying nothing surprising in this, but just what's likely, since even you, even at your age and as wise as you are, would become better if anyone were to teach you something you happened not to know. But that's not the point; put it this way. If Hippocrates here, having a change of heart all of a sudden, had a desire for the company of that young fellow who's just recently come to town, Zeuxippus of Heraclea, and going to him
C the way he has now come to you, he heard from him these same things he's heard from you, that he'd be better each day he was in his company and keep making progress, and he asked him, 'In what respect exactly do you claim I'll be better, and toward what will I be progressing?' Zeuxippus would tell him in respect to painting. And if he came into the company of Orthagoras the Theban, and heard from him these same things he's heard from you, and asked him toward

what he'd get better day by day by associating with him, he'd say toward fluteplaying. So you tell the young fellow too in the same way, and tell me when I ask you on his behalf, 'If Hippocrates here **D** associates with Protagoras, on the very day he comes into company with him he'll go away having become better, and on each of the other days he'll make progress in the same way toward what, Protagoras, and in connection with what?'"

And Protagoras, after hearing these things from me, said, "You put the question beautifully, Socrates, and I'm delighted to reply to those who ask such beautiful questions. For Hippocrates, in coming to me, will not have the same experience he'd have by coming into the company of some of the other sophists. The others abuse the young terribly. For when they've steered clear of the arts, they drag **E** them back again against their will and shove them into arts, teaching them arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and music," as he glanced over at Hippias, "but when he comes to me he won't learn a single thing other than what he came about. The thing to be learned is how to make good decisions[6] about his own affairs, so he can run his own household the best way, and about the affairs of his city, so he can **319A** be the most powerful in his city's affairs in both action and speaking." "Am I following your meaning?" I said. "You seem to me to be talking about the political art, and to be promising to make men good citizens." "That, Socrates," he said, "is the very proclamation I'm proclaiming."

"Then it's a beautiful piece of artfulness you've acquired," I said, "if in fact you *have* acquired it. For to you, nothing other than exactly what I think is going to be said. Because, Protagoras, I didn't believe this thing could be taught, but now that you say it is, I don't see how **B** I can disbelieve it. But if I'm to be just, I need to say on what basis I regard it as not being teachable or something that can be provided to human beings by other human beings. For I, like the rest of the Greeks, claim that Athenians are wise. Now when we convene in the assembly, I see that whenever the city needs to act on some measure pertaining to building, the builders are summoned as advisors about matters of building, and whenever something pertains to shipbuilding, it's the shipbuilders, and the same way with all other matters that they regard **C** as being learnable and teachable. But if anyone else, whom they didn't believe was professionally skilled, were to try to give them advice,

6 "How to make good decisions" translates *euboulia*. The four arts Protagoras mentions by contrast form the classical quadrivium, the mathematical studies that were regarded as dealing with the preeminently learnable things, with music and astronomy understood not as practical disciplines but as theoretical studies of the relations among discrete quantities and continuous magnitudes. It is worth noting that Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1142a 11-20), argues that the young can learn mathematics as well as anyone, but lack the experience, and the appreciation of the value of experience, to learn the things *euboulia* rests on; he discusses the latter capacity just after that, in Bk. VI, Chap. 9.

then even if he's a very fine-looking fellow and rich and belongs to a well-born family, they're none the more receptive to him, but jeer and hoot at him until the fellow trying to speak either stands down himself after he's been shouted down, or the guards drag him away or pick him up and carry him off on orders of the presiding officials. So that's the way they get things done on matters they believe to be in the province of art; but whenever something needs to be deliberated
D on that has to do with managing the affairs of the city, the one who stands up and gives them advice about these things may equally well be a carpenter, a blacksmith, or a leatherworker as well, a merchant or a ship's captain, a rich man or a poor one, of good family or no family, and no one casts aspersions at them, as in the previous cases, for not having learned it anywhere or not having anyone who's been his teacher, and then trying to give advice. For it's obvious that they don't regard it as teachable. What's more, it's not just that way with
E the common concerns of the city, but with us, the wisest and best of our citizens are unable to pass on this virtue that they have, since Pericles, the father of these youngsters here, had them educated
320A beautifully and well in all those matters that involve teachers, but in the matters on which he himself is wise, he neither educates them himself nor turns them over to anyone else; they range free the way the sacred cattle graze, just in case they might happen to run across virtue on their own. Or there's Cleinias if you like, the younger brother of this Alcibiades here; his guardian, this same man Pericles, afraid that he might be corrupted by Alcibiades, kept him away from him, and placing him in Ariphon's family, educated him there; before six
B months had passed, Ariphon gave him back to him, because he had no way to deal with him. And I have a great many others to tell you about who are good themselves but never made any of their family members, or anyone else, better. When I pay attention to these things, then, Protagoras, I don't regard virtue as being something teachable. But when I hear you saying these things, I get turned around and assume there's something in what you say, because I regard you as someone who has become experienced in many matters, has learned many things, and has come up with other things on your own. So if
C you have a clearer way to demonstrate to us that virtue is something teachable, don't begrudge it to us but give the demonstration."

"I certainly won't be grudging, Socrates," he said, "but shall I demonstrate it to you folks the way an older man does to younger ones, by telling a story, or by going through an argument?" Many of those sitting near him put in the opinion that he should go through it in whatever way he wanted to. "Well then," he said, "it seems to me a more gracious thing to tell you a story.

D "Once upon a time there were gods, but no races of mortal beings. But when the allotted time came for them to come to be as well, gods forged them within the earth out of a mixture of earth and fire and all

the alloys of fire and earth. And when they were about to lead them toward the light, they assigned Prometheus and Epimetheus to adorn each kind with powers and to distribute them in a fitting manner. But Epimetheus asked Prometheus to let him distribute them himself, 'and when I've made the distribution,' he said, 'you look it over.' And when he'd persuaded him to do it that way, he made the distribution. In distributing them, he attached strength without speed to some, and **E**
adorned the weaker ones with speed; some he gave weapons, but for those with a nature devoid of weapons, he contrived some other power for their safety. To those of them he had confined in smallness, he distributed winged flight or an underground dwelling place, and those he augmented in size, he made safe by that very means; and he **321A**
made the distribution to equal things out for the others in the same way. And he contrived these things in order to take care that no race would disappear.

"And when he'd supplied them with ways to avoid destroying one another, he contrived protection against the seasons sent by Zeus, clothing them in dense hair and tough hides, sufficient to ward off the winter, but also potent against scorching heat, and so that these same things would be their own bedding, already there for them when they go to their lairs, growing on its own on each one. And under the feet **B**
of some he put hooves, of others, tough skin that doesn't bleed. After that he provided for different foods for the different kinds, fodder from the earth for some, fruit from trees for others, and roots for still others; and some kinds there are to which he gave meat from other animals to be their food, but he added the condition that these would be able to bear few offspring, while those consumed by them would give birth to many, making provision for the preservation of the race.

"Now seeing as how Epimetheus was not really very wise at all, it escaped him that he had used up the powers on the irrational kinds, **C**
while the race of humans was still left unadorned by him, and he was at a loss over what to do about it. And while he was stumped, Prometheus comes to him to look over the distribution, and sees that the other animals had a harmonious provision of all things, but the human being was naked, unshod, and without bedding or weapons. But the allotted day was already at hand, on which the human being too had to go out from the earth into the light. So Prometheus, stuck in bafflement over what sort of safety he could come up with for the human being, steals from Hephaestus and Athena their wisdom in the **D**
arts, together with fire—for there was no ingenuity by which anyone could come into the possession or use of it without fire—and in just that way made his gift to the human race. But while the human being got wisdom for his life in this respect, political wisdom he did not get, since that was in the keeping of Zeus. Prometheus could not trespass so far as to enter the citadel that was the dwelling place of Zeus—and what's more, Zeus's guards were fearsome—but as for the dwelling

E shared by Athena and Hephaestus, where they indulged their passionate pursuit of the arts, he got into that without being noticed. And when he'd stolen the fiery art that belonged to Hephaestus and the other sort that belonged to Athena, he gave them to the human being,
322A and from this source there came to the human race an ease of providing for its life. Later though, according to what is said, punishment overtook Prometheus for the theft, all because of Epimetheus.

"And since the human being got a share of what was allotted to the gods, he first of all, through this kinship to the god, was the only one of the animals to believe in gods, and he set his hand to putting up altars and statues of gods. Next, by means of art, he quickly elaborated articulate sound and words, and came up with dwellings, clothing, shoes, bedding, and foods from the earth. At the beginning,
B when they were provided for in just that way, human beings lived in scattered fashion, and there were no cities. So they were killed by wild animals, because they were weaker than they in every respect; and while their art at crafting things was sufficient assistance for them as far as food went, it was deficient when it came to war with wild animals—for they did not yet have the political art, and the art of war is part of that. So they sought to gather their forces and keep safe by founding cities. But any time when they did gather, they did injustice to one another as a result of not having the political art, and so they dispersed again and were dying off.

C "So then Zeus, fearing for our race, lest it might all die out, sends Hermes to bring humans a sense of shame and of a right way, so there could be orderly behavior in cities and bonds of friendship to unite people. And Hermes asks Zeus in what manner he should give humans a sense of the right and of shame. 'Do I distribute these the same way the arts were distributed? They were distributed like this: one person with the medical art was enough for many private people, as were the rest of those with professional skills. Do I put a sense of
D the right and of shame in humans in that way too, or do I pass them out to them all?' 'To them all,' said Zeus, 'and let everyone get a share, because cities could not come into being if few were to have a share the way they do with the other arts. And even make it a law from me to put to death anyone incapable of sharing in a sense of shame and of the right, as a plague on a city.'

"So, Socrates, in this way and for these reasons everyone else, as well as the Athenians, when there's a discussion about virtues pertaining to building or to any other kind of craftsmanship, believes that few
E people have a share in giving advice, and if anyone outside of those few does give advice, they don't permit it, as you say—and that's
323A reasonable, as I say—but when they get to advice on political virtue, which must all go the way of justice and moderation, it's reasonable for them to permit every man to give it, since it's the fitting thing for

everyone to have a share of this sort of virtue, or else there would be no cities. This, Socrates, is the cause of the matter.

"And so you won't think you're being misled into thinking that all people in actual fact regard all men as sharing in justice and the rest of political virtue, take this further point as proof positive: with other sorts of virtue, as you say, if anyone claims to be a good fluteplayer, or to be good at any other art whatever, when he isn't, people will either laugh at him or get angry, and his family will go to him and warn him that he's doing something crazy, but with justice and the rest of political virtue, even when they know that someone is unjust, if that person himself tells the truth on himself in front of a lot of people, what they would have regarded as sane moderation in the previous case—telling the truth—they regard here as craziness. They declare that all people have to claim to be just, whether they are or not, and that anyone would be crazy not to make that pretense, since they think no one at all could possibly have no share of justice in one way or another, or he wouldn't be included in the human race. **B** **C**

"As to the fact, then, that it's a reasonable thing for people to accept every man as an advisor on this sort of virtue, because they regard everyone as having a share of it, that's what I have to say. Next after this, I'll try to demonstrate to you that they regard this virtue as something that doesn't come by nature or pop up on its own, but as a teachable thing that becomes present in anyone it does become present in as a result of painstaking effort. For with all those evils people regard one another as having by nature or by chance, no one gets worked up at those who have them, or scolds or lectures or disciplines them to make them not be that way; they just pity them. Who would be so senseless as to try to do any of those things with people who are, say, ugly or small or weak? For with those things, I presume they know that they come to people by nature or by chance, the beautiful things and their opposites. But with all those good things they believe come to human beings by effort and training and teaching, if anyone doesn't have them but has the bad things that are their opposites, here, for these, is where flare-ups of feeling and disciplinary measures and scoldings come in. Injustice is one of these, and so is impiety, and everything, in short, that's opposed to political virtue. It's on that score that everyone gets upset with and scolds everyone, obviously on the grounds that it's something one can get by effort and learning. **D** **E** **324A**

"For if you take the trouble to reflect on discipline, Socrates, and what power it can possibly exert on unjust people, that by itself will teach you that human beings *think* virtue can be imposed. For no one who has any sense disciplines the unjust for fact that they committed injustice and for the sake of that alone, no one who's not taking retribution irrationally like a wild animal. Someone who's trying to discipline another person with rationality doesn't take retribution **B**

for the sake of the bygone act of injustice—for he can't make what's been done be undone—but for the sake of the future, so that neither that person himself nor anyone else who sees him being punished will commit injustice again. And someone who has such a thought thinks virtue is obtained by education; he's imposing discipline for the sake of a deterrent, at any rate. So everyone holds this opinion
C who engages in retribution privately or in public. The rest of mankind take retribution and impose discipline on those they believe commit injustice, and not least your fellow citizens the Athenians. So by this argument, the Athenians too are among those who regard virtue as something that can be imposed and taught. That, then, it's reasonable for your fellow citizens to permit a blacksmith and a leatherworker to give advice on matters of civic concern, and that they regard virtue as teachable and able to be imposed, has been sufficiently demonstrated
D to you Socrates, the way it appears to me, anyway.

"What still remains, then, is the puzzlement that leaves you puzzled about good men: why in the world good men have their sons taught all the other things that are in the scope of teachers, and make them wise, but don't make them better than anyone else in that sort of virtue by which they themselves are good. About this, Socrates, I won't tell you a story any more, but give an argument.

"Just consider this: is there or is there not some one thing that it's
E necessary for all citizens to share in if there's going to be a city? For this puzzlement that puzzles you has its resolution here and nowhere else. For if there is, and this one thing is not carpentry or blacksmith-
325A ing or pottery but justice and moderation and being pious, and that one very thing to which, taken together, I apply the name of a man's virtue—if this is what everyone needs to share in, and it's with this that every man needs to act if there's anything else he also wants to learn or do, and not act without this, and if one needs to teach and discipline anyone who does not have a share in this, whether it's a child, a man, or a woman, until the one who's disciplined becomes a better person, but one needs to cast out of the cities or put to death
B anyone who, when disciplined and taught, doesn't respond, as being incurable—if that's how it is, and if, even though it's that way by nature, good men teach their sons everything else but not this, look at what a surprising way of going about things good people get themselves into. For we've demonstrated that they regard it as something teachable both in private and in public, but while it is teachable and can be instilled by attentive care, they then teach their sons all the other things, for which there is no death penalty if they don't know them, but that thing for which there is a penalty of death or exile for
C their children if they don't learn it or have it instilled in them to the point of virtue, and not only death but confiscation of property and, to put it all in one phrase, the overthrow of households—this they don't teach and don't exert every effort over? One would have to assume

they do, Socrates. Starting with them as small children and for as long as they live, they both teach and admonish them. As soon as one of them understands what's said, his nurse, his mother, his tutor, and his father himself strive mightily for this, that the child be most excellent, **D** teaching and pointing out about every deed and word that one is just and another unjust, that this is beautiful and that's shameful, this is pious and that's impious, that one does some things and does not do others. And it may be that he's persuaded willingly, but if not, then just as with wood that's warped and bent, they straighten him out with threats and beatings. And afterward, when they send them off to teachers, they instruct them to take much greater pains that their **E** children be in good order than that their writing or harp-playing be that way, and their teachers do take these pains, and when in turn the children have learned written words and are on the point of understanding written things just as well as they understood spoken ones before, they set before them on their desks works of good poets to read and compel them to learn these by heart; in them are contained **326A** lots of admonitions and lots of detailed descriptions and praises of and tributes to good men of ancient times, so that the child will be eager to imitate them and will long to become that kind of person. And on their side, the harp teachers too take pains in other similar ways over moderation and that the youngsters don't behave badly in any way, and in addition to that, once they've learned to play the harp, they teach them the works of other good poets who compose songs, and setting these to the music of the harp, they compel the **B** children to absorb the rhythms and harmonies into their souls so as to make them more civilized, and so that, by becoming more in tune with rhythm and harmony, they'll be well fitted to speak and to act; for the whole life of a human being needs to be rhythmic and harmonious to be in good condition. Still more, on top of that, they send them to an athletic trainer so they'll have better bodies in service of their thinking once *it*'s in a fit condition, and they won't be forced to **C** be cowards, both in war and other actions, because of the shoddiness of their bodies. The most powerful people do these things the most—and it's the richest people who are the most powerful—and their sons start going regularly to teachers at the earliest age and are freed from them the latest. And when they are set free from teachers, the city in turn compels them to learn the laws and live by them as patterns, so **D** they won't act randomly at the prompting of their own whims, but in literally the same way that writing teachers give those children who aren't yet skilled at writing a tablet with letters they've already traced out with a stylus, and make them write along the guiding lines, so too the city, having traced out the laws found out by good lawgivers of earlier times, compels them to rule and be ruled along these lines, and disciplines whoever strays outside them. And the name for this disciplinary process among you, and in many other places, is 'correc- **E**

tions,' on the grounds that judicial punishment produces rectitude. So when there is so much painstaking care about virtue in private and in public, are you wondering and puzzled, Socrates, whether virtue is something teachable? But there shouldn't be any wonder in that; it would be much more to be wondered at if it were not teachable.

"So why is it that many sons of good fathers turn out to be worthless people? Learn this now. For it's no wonder, if indeed I was speak-
327A ing the truth in my earlier remarks, that in this business of virtue, if there's going to be a city, it's required that no one go about it as an amateur. For if it's the way I say—and of all things, *it* most assuredly *is*—then consider any other pursuit or learnable thing whatever of your choice. If it were not possible for there to be a city unless all of us were fluteplayers, with whatever sort of capacity each of us had, and if everyone taught this to everyone in private and in public, and reprimanded anyone who didn't play the flute beautifully, and was unstinting about this, just as now no one makes any secret about what's
B just and lawful or begrudges it to anyone the way people do with the lore of other arts—because, I presume, justice and virtue toward one another are profitable to us, and for that reason everyone eagerly tells and teaches everyone what's just and lawful. So if in fluteplaying too we had such a total and unstinting eagerness to teach one another, do you imagine, Socrates," he said, "that the sons of good fluteplayers would become good fluteplayers one bit more than the sons of lousy fluteplayers would? I rather think not, but whosever son happened to have been born with the greatest natural talent for fluteplaying,
C he's the one who'd grow in distinction, while whosever son was untalented would be unknown to fame. An indifferent fluteplayer would often come from a good one, and a good one often from an indifferent one, but they'd all certainly be competent fluteplayers as compared with ordinary people who had no grasp of fluteplaying. In the same way now too, think of anyone who appears to you as the most unjust human being of those raised among laws and human society as himself being just, and a skilled practioner in this matter,
D if one had to judge him against humans who have no education, no courts, no laws, and no necessity at all incessantly compelling them to care about virtue; they'd be some sort of savages, just like those the poet Pherecrates gave direction for last year in the Lenaean festival. Why if you came among people of such a kind as the haters of the human race in that chorus were, you'd be delighted if you ran into Eurybatus and Phrynondas, and you'd cry out in yearning for the
E viciousness that's found among people here.

"But the way things are, you're spoiled, Socrates; because everyone is a teacher of virtue to the extent each has the power to be, it appears to you that no one is. Well the same way as if you were looking for
328A someone who's a teacher of Greek, there wouldn't appear to be even one, I don't imagine, if you were looking for someone who'd teach

the sons of our handicraftsmen the very same arts that they'd already learned from their fathers, to the extent the father and his friends who shared the same art had the power, and wanted to find someone who could still teach them, I don't imagine it would be easy, Socrates, for a teacher for *them* to make an appearance, but quite easy in the case of one for inexperienced people, and that's the way it is with virtue and everything else. But if there's anyone who surpasses us even a little bit in leading people to virtue, that's something to be delighted **B** about. And it's exactly in this category that I believe myself to be, someone who is better than other human beings at helping people come toward the beautiful and good, and I believe I'm worth the fee I charge and still more than that, so much so that it seems that way even to the student himself. And for these reasons, I've adopted this sort of procedure for charging the fee: whenever anyone learns from me, he pays over the amount of money that I charge if he wants to, but if **C** not, he goes into a temple and takes an oath as to how much he takes the things he's learned to be worth, and puts down that amount.

"Such as it is, then, Socrates," he said, "I've given you both a story and an argument, to the effect that virtue is something teachable and the Athenians regard it so, and that there's nothing surprising about it when the sons of good fathers turn out to be indifferent people and those of indifferent fathers turn out to be good, since even the sons of Polycleitus, who are the same age as Paralus and Xanthippus here, are not at all comparable to their father, as is true of other sons of other artisans. But these fellows here don't deserve to have that charge made **D** against them yet; there's still hope for them. They're young."

When Protagoras had made such a display of such a length, he broke off his speech. And for a long time I was spellbound, still gazing at him as if he was going to say something, and longing to hear it. But when I realized that he must be well and truly finished, I somehow, with an effort, pulled myself together, in a manner of speaking, and looking over at Hippocrates, I said, "Son of Apollodorus, how grateful I am to you for having prevailed on me to come here. For I consider it a great favor to have heard what I've heard from Protagoras. For in **E** all the time before this, I used to think it was not by any human effort that good people become good, but now I'm persuaded. Except there's one little thing standing in my way, which obviously Protagoras will easily explain away, since he's explained so many of these things as well. For if one were go to any of the public speakers too about these same matters, one would probably hear speeches just like this from **329A** either Pericles or any of the others who are competent at speaking. But if one were to press any of them with any question, then like books they have no answer to give and no question to ask themselves; if anyone asks them even a tiny question about a point they've mentioned, then the same way cymbals that have been struck go on sounding for a long time and keep stretching it out unless someone puts a hand

B on them, so too the rhetorical speakers, when they've been asked a tiny question, draw out a long-distance speech. But Protagoras here, while he's competent at making long and beautiful speeches, as they themselves show, is also well able to answer with brevity when he's asked a question, and to wait for and accept the answer when he asks a question, which are gifts bestowed on few people.

"Now then, Protagoras, I'm in need of one little thing in order to have it all, if you would answer me this. You claim virtue is teachable, and if I can be persuaded of this by anyone else among human beings, C I'll be persuaded by you But just satisfy my soul on this point that I was wondering about while you were speaking. You were saying that Zeus had sent justice and a sense of shame to human beings, and then again in many places in your arguments, justice and moderation and piety and all those things were spoken of by you as if taken together they were some one thing, virtue. So go over these same things for me in a precise way in an argument, as to whether virtue is some one thing, and justice, moderation, and piety are parts of it, or these things D which I just now spoke of are all names for the same thing, which is one. That's the thing I'm still yearning for."

"But that's easy to answer, Socrates," he said; "the things you're asking about are parts of virtue, which is one thing." "Are they parts in the same way as the parts of a face," I said, "the mouth and nose and eyes and ears, or like parts of gold, where one is no different from another, between themselves or in relation to the whole, other than in E being big or small?" "It appears to me to be the first way, Socrates, the same way the parts of a face are related to the face as a whole." "So then do human beings get their share of these parts of virtue," I said, "with some having one, others having another, or is it necessary that if anyone gets one he has them all?" "By no means," he said, "since many people are courageous but unjust, and many too are just but not 330A wise." "So these are also parts of virtue," I said, "wisdom and courage?" "They most of all, without a doubt," he said, "and wisdom is certainly the greatest of the parts." "And each of them is one thing," I said, "and another is another thing?" "Yes." "And does each of them have its own particular power? Just as, with the parts of a face, an eye is not the same sort of thing as the ears, and its power is not the same, and neither is any of the others the same sort of thing as a different one, either in its power or in any other way, is that how it is with the parts of virtue too, that there is no one part that's the same sort of thing as B another, in itself or in its power? Isn't it obviously exactly that way, if indeed it's like its model?" "It's just that way, Socrates," he said. And I said, "Therefore no other one of the parts of virtue is the same sort of thing as knowledge, or the same sort of thing as justice, or the same sort of thing as courage, or the same sort of thing as moderation, or the same sort of thing as piety." He said no.

"Come then," I said, "let's examine in common what sort of thing each of them is. First, let's consider this kind of point: is justice a thing **C** or not a thing at all? It seems to me it is, but how does it seem to you?" "To me too," he said. "Well then, if someone were to ask me and you both, 'Hey Protagoras and Socrates, tell me you two, this thing, as you folks were just calling it, justice, is this itself just or unjust?' I'd answer him that it's just, but how would you cast your vote? The same as mine or different?" "The same," he said. "Justice, therefore, is such a thing as to be just, is what I'd claim in answer to the one who **D** asked the question. And how about you?" "Yes," he said. "And if he were to ask us next, 'And you folks claim that piety is something?' I imagine we'd claim it is." "Yes," he said. "'And you claim this too is a thing?' Would we claim it is, or not?" He agreed with this too. "'And do you folks claim that this thing itself is of such a nature as to be impious or to be pious?' I'd be offended at the one asking the question," I said, "and I'd say 'Watch what you say, mister. It would sure be hard for anything else to be pious, if piety itself isn't going to **E** be pious.' What about you? Wouldn't you answer the same way?" "Very much so," he said.

"And if, in questioning us, he were to say next, 'Then what did you folks mean by what you were saying a little while ago? Didn't I hear you correctly? You folks seemed to me to be claiming that parts of virtue were related to one another in such a way that one of them is not the same sort of thing as another.' For my part, I'd say 'You heard the rest of it correctly, but you misheard if you think I said that too. Protagoras here was the one giving those answers; I was just asking. **331A** So if he says, 'Is this man telling the truth, Protagoras? You claim that one part of virtue is not the same sort of thing as another part? This is your statement?' what would you answer him?" "It would be necessary for me to agree, Socrates," he said.

"Then having agreed to that, Protagoras, what would we answer him if he went on to ask us, 'Therefore piety is a thing that's not of such a sort to be just, and justice is not of such a sort to be pious, but *not* pious? Is it the case then that piety is of such a sort as to be not just but unjust, and justice impious?' What answer will we give him? **B** I myself, on my own behalf, anyway, would claim that justice is pious and piety is just. And I'd give these same answers on your behalf too, if you allow me to, because justness is either the same thing as piety or as similar to it as possible, and justice most of all things is like piety, and piety most of all things like justice. But see whether you object to my giving the answer or whether it seems that way to you too in common with me." "It doesn't seem to me to be quite so simple, Socrates, that I could agree justice is something pious and piety is **C** something just; there seems to me to be something different in it. But what difference does that make?" he said. "If you want to, let justice be pious and piety be just for us." "That's not good enough for me,"

I said. "I have no use for this 'if you want to' and 'if it seems that way to you'; what I need to have cross-examined is me and you. And I say this 'me and you' in the belief that the best way for the argument to
D be cross-examined is if one takes the 'if' out of it."

"Well sure," he said, "justice has some similarity to piety, because anything whatever is similar to anything whatever in one way or another. White is similar to black in a certain respect, and hard to soft, and all the other things that seem to be totally opposite to one another. And the things we were claiming before have different powers, and that one is not the same sort of thing as another, the parts of a face, in one way or another they're also similar and one *is* the same sort of
E thing as another. So you could cross-examine in that way even about them, if you wanted to, since all things have similarities to one another. But it's not a just thing to call things that have some similarity 'similar' even when the similarity they have is very small, or to call things that have some dissimilarity 'dissimilar'." And I was surprised, and said to him, "That's the way it seems to you the just and the pious are related to each other, that they have some little similarity between them?"
332A "That's not the way it is at all," he said, "but it's surely not the way you seem to me to think it is either."

"Well," I said, "since you seem to me to be irritated about this, let's let it go and examine this other thing you were saying. There's something you call a lack of good sense?" He said there was. "And isn't wisdom the complete opposite of this thing?" "It seems so to me," he said. "And whenever human beings act rightly and advantageously, does it seem to you that they are then being moderate in so acting or
B the opposite?" "Being moderate," he said. "And they're moderate by means of moderation?" "Necessarily." "And those who act in a way that's not right act without good sense, and in so acting are not being moderate?" "It seems so to me as well," he said.[7] "Therefore acting without good sense is the opposite of acting moderately?" He said it was. "And things done without good sense are done with a lack of good sense, while things done moderately are done with moderation?" He agreed. "And if anything is done with strength, it's done strongly, if with weakness, weakly?" It seemed so to him. "And if anything
C is done with speed, speedily, if with slowness, slowly?" He said so. "And if anything is done in a way that's the same, it's done by the same power, if in a way that's opposite, by the opposite power?" He joined in saying that.

"Come then," I said, "is there something beautiful?" He went along with that. "Is there anything opposite to this exept the ugly?" "There isn't." "What about this? Is there something good?" "There is." "Is there anything opposite to this except the bad?" "There isn't." "What about this? Is there something high-pitched in sound?" He said

7 The word for "a lack of good sense" (*aphrosunê*) is used as the opposite of wisdom (*sophia*), but formed as the opposite of moderation (*sophrosunê*).

there was. "And there isn't anything opposite to this except what's low-pitched?" He said there wasn't. "And for each one of the opposites," I said, "is there only one opposite and not many?" He joined in agreement. "Come on then," I said, "let's gather up the things agreed **D**
to by us. We're agreed that one thing is opposite to one thing only and not more?" "We're agreed." "And what's done in an opposite way is done by opposite powers?" He said it was. "And we're agreed that something done without good sense is done in an opposite way to something done moderately?" He said we were. "And something done moderately is done with moderation, while something done without good sense is done with a lack of good sense?" He went along **E**
with that. "And if it's done in an opposite way, it would be done by an opposite power?" "Yes." "And the one is done with moderation, the other by a lack of good sense?" "Yes." "In opposite ways?" "Certainly." "And accordingly by powers that are opposites?" "Yes." "Is a lack of good sense the opposite of moderation?" "It appears so." "Now do you remember that it was agreed by us in the earlier discussion that a lack of good sense is the opposite of wisdom?" He joined in agreement. "But one thing is opposite to one thing only?" **333A**
"I'd say so."

"Then which of our statements are we going to turn loose, Protagoras? One thing's being opposite to one thing only, or the one in which it was said that moderation is something different from wisdom, while each one is a part of virtue, in addition to being different and dissimilar, both they themselves and their powers, just like the parts of a face? Which of the two are we going to turn loose? For these statements, when stated together, don't sound very musical, since they don't sing the same tune and aren't in harmony with each other. How *could* they sing the same tune if it's necessary for one thing to be opposite to one thing only, and not more, while to a lack **B**
of good sense, which is one thing, wisdom and then again moderation appear to be opposite? Is that the situation, Protagoras," I said, "or is it in any way different?" He agreed, though very unwillingly. "So would moderation and wisdom be one thing? Then too, earlier on, it appeared manifest to us that justice and piety are pretty much the same thing. So come on, Protagoras," I said, "let's not fade out, but keep on examining the remaining cases too. Does it seem to you that any human being is moderate in committing injustice, whatever **C**
injustice he commits?" "*I'*d be ashamed to agree to that, Socrates," he said, "although many human beings certainly say so." "Well shall I make the argument in regard to them," I said, "or in regard to you?" "If you want to," he said, "discuss it with regard to that first statement, the one most people make." "It doesn't make any difference to me, so long as you give the answers, whether or not those things seem that way to you. For it's the argument that I'll be testing primarily,

though it turns out that I the questioner as well as the answerer will be tested too."

D Now at first Protagoras put on a pretty show of reluctance for us, for he alleged that the argument was too distasteful, but eventually he gave way, agreeing to answer. "Come on then," I said, "and answer me from the beginning. Does it seem to you that some people are moderate in committing injustice?" "Let it be so," he said. "And by being moderate, do you mean using good sense?" He said he did. "And using good sense is making good decisions about whatever injustices they commit?" "Let it be so," he said. "And is that if they do well by committing injustice, or if they do badly?" "If they do well." "And you say that certain things are good?" "I say that." "And are those things
E good," I said, "that are advantageous to human beings?" "Yes, by Zeus!" he said, "and even when they're not advantageous to human beings, *I* still call them good!" And at this point Protagoras seemed to me to be spoiling for a fight and armed and ready for answering. So since I saw that he was in such a state, I was cautious and put my question gently. "Which way do you mean it, Protagoras," I said:
334A "things that are advantageous to no human being or things that aren't advantageous at all? And are you calling things of *that* sort good?"

"Not at all," he said. "But *I* know lots of good things that are of no advantage to human beings, foods and drinks and drugs and ten thousand other things, and others that are advantageous; I know some that are neither one way nor the other for humans, but are for horses, others only for cattle, and others for dogs, and some for none of these but for trees, and some that are good for the roots of trees but
B bad for the buds—such as manure, which is good for the roots of all plants when it's spread on them, but in case you might feel a desire to throw it on the shoots and young branches, it kills all of *them*. And olive oil, although it's thoroughly bad for all plants, and most injurious to the hair of the rest of the animals other than that of the human being, is a boon to human hair and to the rest of the body. So varied and multifarious a thing is the good that here is something that's
C good for the outside of the human body but for its insides, this same thing is the worst, and hence all doctors forbid people in a weakened condition to use olive oil, other than the smallest possible amount, on the things they're going to eat, just enough to subdue any unsavoriness in their foods and sauces that might make its way to their senses through the nostrils."

When he said this, those present broke into applause as though he'd spoken well, and I said, "Protagoras, I happen to be a forgetful
D sort of human being, and if anyone speaks to me at length, I lose track of what the discussion is about. Now if I happened to be hard of hearing, you'd think it necessary, if you were going to have a conversation with me, to speak louder than you would to other people, so in the same way now too, since you've happened across someone who's apt

to forget things, cut your answers up into pieces for me and make them shorter, if I'm to follow you." "Well *how* are you telling me to give short answers? Should I give answers shorter than they need to be, to suit you?" he said. "Not at all," I said. "However long they need to be, then?" he said. "Yes," I said. "However long it seems to me **E** they need to be answered, that's how long I should make the answers for you, or however long it seems to you?" "I've heard, anyway," I said, "that you have the ability yourself, and that you're able to teach someone else, to speak at length when you want to, so much so that the speech never runs out, or else to speak about the same things in such brief terms that no one could say it in fewer words. So if you're **335A** going to have a conversation with me, use this other style for me, the brief-speaking style." "Socrates," he said, "I've gotten into competition in speeches with a lot of human beings by now, and if I had done what you're telling me to, that I should hold the conversation in the way the rival speaker told me to hold it, I would not have made a better appearance than anyone, and the name of Protagoras would not have come into prominence among the Greeks."

Now I knew that he wasn't satisfied with himself about his earlier answers, and that as far as he was concerned he wouldn't be willing **B** to have a conversation in which he answered questions, so I no longer considered it any business of mine to be present in those gatherings, and I said, "I'll tell you, Protagoras, I'm uncomfortable too about having our gathering go in a direction contrary to what seems good to you, but when you want to have a conversation in a manner that I have the power to follow, then I'll have a conversation with you. For you, as people say about you and you yourself declare, are able to conduct a gathering in either lengthy speech or brief speech—because **C** you're wise—but I'm powerless for those long ones, even though I might wish to have that ability. It would have behooved you to go along with us, since you have the power for both ways, so the gathering could have come to pass. But now, since you're unwilling, and I have something to attend to and won't be able to stay with you while you while you draw out long speeches—there's someplace I have to get to—I'm going, though it would probably not be unpleasant to listen to you on these matters too."

While I was saying these things, I started to stand up as if to go away, and as I was getting up, Callias clutched my hand with his right hand and grabbed this shabby cloak of mine with his left, and **D** said, "We won't let you go, Socrates, because our discussions won't be the same if you leave. I beg you to stay with us, since there's no one I'd get more pleasure out of listening to than you and Protagoras having a conversation. So do us all a favor." I was standing by now, as if to make my exit, and I said, "Son of Hipponicus, I'm constantly in admiration of your love for philosophy, but especially now I have **E** praise and love for it, so I'd be willing to do you this favor if you were

asking for things in my power. But in the present case, it's just as if you were asking me to keep up with Crison, the sprinter from Himera, in his prime, or to run a race against one of the long-distance runners
336A or all-day racers and keep pace; I'd tell you that I ask it of myself much more than you could to follow the footsteps of these runners, but I just don't have the power to. But if there's some need to have the spectacle of Crison and me running in the same race, ask him to make the accomodation, for while I have no power to run swiftly, he does have the power to run slowly. So if you have a desire to listen to Protagoras and me, ask him to give answers now in the same way he was giving them to me at first, with short replies to the very things
B that are asked. Otherwise, what form of conversational exchanges will there be? Because *I*, at any rate, thought getting together and having a conversation with one another, and holding forth in front of a crowd, were two different things."

"But don't you see Socrates," he said, "that Protagoras seems to be saying what's only just in considering it right for him to have the liberty of conversing the way he wants, and you in turn in whatever way you might want."

Then Alcibiades interjected, "You're committing a fallacy,[8] Callias. Socrates here admits that there's no way for him to participate in lengthy speaking, and he gives way to Protagoras on that, but in
C his ability at having a conversation, and his knowing how to handle the give and take of argument, I'd be surprised if he gives way to anyone among human beings. So if Protagoras also admits that he's inferior to Socrates at having a conversation, Socrates is content to accept that. But if claims otherwise, let him *have* a conversation by asking and answering questions, not by drawing out a long speech in response to each thing that's asked, batting aside the arguments
D and being unwilling to give an explanation, but just going on and on until most of the listeners have forgotten what the question was about, although I promise you *Socrates* won't forget, no matter how playful he might be and claim he's forgetful. So what Socrates is saying seems more fair to me: each of them should let his own judgment appear right out in the open."

After Alcibiades, I believe it was Critias who spoke: "Prodicus and
E Hippias, Callias seems to me to be very much on Protagoras' side, and Alcibiades is always eager for a quarrel about whatever he's stirring up, but there's no need for *us* to get into a quarrel with either Socrates or Protagoras; we should jointly beg them both not to break up our gathering midway through."

337A When he said that, Prodicus said, "You seem to me to be making a beautiful point, Critias, for it behooves those who find themselves

8 Literally, "you're not speaking beautifully," but the effect of Alcibiades' intervention depends in part on the playful tone of *"ou kalôs…ô Kallia,"* and the translation attempts to catch something of its sound.

present at discussions such as these to be listeners to the pair of interlocutors jointly, but not equally—for these are not the same. One ought to listen jointly to both together, but not give an equal hearing to each, but more to the more wise and less to the less wise. And for my part, Protagoras and Socrates, I consider it fitting for you to get together and dispute, but not quarrel, with each other about the **B** arguments—for friends dispute with friends and do so with goodwill, but adversaries and enemies quarrel with each other—and in such a manner our gathering would come to be most beautiful. For in that manner you the speakers would be most respected, not just praised, by us the listeners—for the feeling of respect is in the souls of the listeners without deception, but the giving of praise is often in the words of prevaricators contrary to their opinion—and we the listeners in turn **C** would in that way be the most appreciative, not just pleased—for one is appreciative when he learns something and gains some good sense in his thinking power itself, but one is pleased when he eats something or undergoes some other pleasure exclusively in his body."

As Prodicus said these things, quite a number of those present accepted them, and next after Prodicus, the wise Hippias spoke, and said, "Men, I regard you who are present here as kinsmen, close associates, and fellow citizens all—by nature, not by law. For like **D** is kin to like by nature, while law is a tyrant over humankind, and does violence in many ways that go against nature—so I regard it as shameful that we, having knowledge of the nature of things, being the wisest of the Greeks, gathered together now for this very reason in the very sanctuary of wisdom of Greece and in this the greatest household in that very city, and the house most favored by fortune, and in spite of this we give no appearance of anything worthy of the **E** worth we represent, but squabble with one another like human beings of the lowest sort. So my advice to you, Protagoras and Socrates, and I beg you to take it, is that you come together on a compromise on such terms as we work out as arbiters. Don't demand that precise **338A** form of conversational exchanges that goes back and forth in such brief responses, if that's not pleasing to Protagoras, but ease up and give the speeches looser reins, so they might give us an appearance of greater grandeur and elegance; and Protagoras for his part shouldn't let out all his sails and launch himself into the wind, breaking out onto the high sea of speeches and losing sight of land. Both must strike a happy medium. Do this then, and be persuaded by me to choose someone to be gavel-holder, chairman-in-charge, and presiding officer, who'll keep watch for you for a moderate length in the speeches **B** on each side."

These things were to the liking of those present, and everyone approved them; Callias refused to let me go, and asked me to choose a chairman. So I said it would be shameful to choose someone to hand out prizes for the speeches, "since the one chosen will either be our

inferior, and it wouldn't be right for an inferior to be in charge of his betters, or an equal, and that wouldn't be right either, because our
C equal will do things the same way we would, so there'll be no point in his being chosen. Well, then, say you choose someone better than we are. The truth of it is, I imagine, you have no power to choose anyone wiser than Protagoras here, and if you choose someone who isn't better and say that he is, that would even bring shame on this man, to pick someone to be in charge of him as though he were an ordinary human being, though if it were just for me I wouldn't care at all. But here's what I'm willing to do, so we can have the gathering and discussions
D you're all so eager for. If Protagoras doesn't want to give answers, let him ask questions, and I'll give the answers, while at the same time I'll be trying to show him how I claim someone answering questions ought to answer them. And when I've answered as many questions as he wants to ask, let him give me back his account of the matter in similar fashion. Then if he doesn't seem to be eager to give a direct answer to the very thing that was asked, you folks and I in common will require of him exactly what you're requiring of me: not to spoil
E the gathering. And for this purpose there's no need for there to be one chairman, but all of you in common will be in charge." Everyone seemed resolved that this was the way it ought to be done. And while Protagoras was not entirely willing, he was nevertheless compelled to agree to ask questions, and, once he'd asked enough, to give an account in return in short answers.

So he started asking in something like the following way. "In *my* opinion, Socrates," he said, "the most important part of an eduction
339A for a man is to be formidable in the matter of verses; that is, to be able to understand which of the things said by the poets are composed rightly and which not, and to know how to distinguish them and give an account of them when questions come up. And now in particular, the question will concern the very thing you and I are now having our conversation about, namely virtue, but carried over into poetry; it will differ to that extent only. Now Simonides says somewhere, to
B Scopas, the son of Creon of Thessaly, that

> Ah, but it's hard in truth for a man to become good,
> Built squarely in hands, feet, and mind, beyond reproach.

Do you know this ode, or shall I go through the whole thing?" And I said, "There's no need; I know it, and it so happens I've paid quite a lot of attention to that ode."

"Well said," he said. "So does it seem beautifully and rightly composed to you or not?" "Very beautifully and rightly," I said. "And does it seem to you that something has been beautifully composed if the poet himself contradicts himself?" "Not beautifully," I said.
C "Well take a better look at it," he said. "My good man, I've examined

it well enough." "Then you know that as the ode goes on, he says at one point,

> That saying of Pittacus doesn't seem to me well-tuned,
> Spoken though it was by a wise mortal: hard, he says, to be good.

Do you notice that this same person is saying both these things and those previous ones?" "I know," I said. "And does it seem to you," he said, "that the latter are in agreement with the former?" "It appears so to me," I said, though at the same time I was afraid he might have a point; "but doesn't it appear that way to you?" "Why, how could the very person who's saying both these things appear to be in agree- **D**
ment with himself, when he himself first sets it down that it's hard in truth for a man to become good, but then, when he gets a little farther along in his poem, forgets and blames Pittacus for saying the same things as himself, that it's hard to be good, and refuses to accept from him the very things said by himself? Yet any time he casts blame on someone who says the same things he does, it's obvious that he's also blaming himself, so that either in the earlier place or the later one he's not speaking rightly."

When he said these things, he got a round of applause and praise from many of the listeners. And at first, just as if I'd taken a punch from **E**
a good boxer, my sight dimmed and my head spun from these things he'd said and from the roar of approval from the others. Then—and to tell you the truth, it was just to get myself some time for considering what the poet meant—I turned toward Prodicus, and calling to him I said, "Prodicus, Simonides is *your* fellow citizen, you know; in justice, **340A**
you're the one to come to the man's defense, so I think I'm going to call upon you. It's the same way Homer says Scamander, when he was under siege from Achilles, called upon Simois, saying

> Dear brother, let both of us together hold back the strength of the man.

I call upon you now, that we not stand by and let Protagoras leave Simonides overthrown. For setting Simonides back on his feet especially requires your Muse-inspired artistry, by which you differentiate wishing and desiring as not being the same, and make the many **B**
beautiful distinctions you were just now speaking of. And consider now whether it seems to you too the same way it seems to me, since it doesn't *appear* that Simonides himself is contradicting himself. Now you, Prodicus, begin by letting your judgment appear right out in the open: do becoming and being seem to you to be the same or different?" "Different, by Zeus!" Prodicus said. "And in those first lines," I said, "doesn't Simonides let his own judgment appear in the open,

C that it would be a hard thing for a man to become good in truth?" "What you say is true," Prodicus said. "And as for Pittacus," I said, "he blames him not for saying the same thing as himself, as Protagoras assumes, but something different. For that's not what Pittacus said was hard, 'becoming good,' the way Simonides did, but 'being good.' But they're not the same thing, Protagoras, as Prodicus here claims, being and becoming. And if being isn't the same thing as becoming,
D Simonides himself isn't contradicting himself. And Prodicus here, and many others as well, would probably claim, in accord with Hesiod, that becoming good is a hard thing,

> For before virtue, the gods have placed sweat,

but when

> One reaches its summit, then it's easy going,
> Hard though it was to attain."

Then Prodicus, when he'd heard these things, praised me, but Protagoras said, "Your way of setting Simonides back on his feet has a greater error in it than the one you want to set right, Socrates." And
E I said, "Then that's a bad job by me, it seems, Protagoras, and I'm a ridiculous doctor; I make the disease worse by treating it." "That's just the way it is," he said. "How so?" I said. "It would be a great lack of intelligence on the part of the poet," he said, "if he's claiming virtue is so slight a thing to attain, when it's the hardest of all things, as it seems to all human beings." And I said, "By Zeus, Prodicus here has happened to join up with us in our arguments at an opportune
341A moment. For it's likely, you know, Protagoras, that Prodicus's wisdom is something divine and ancient, originating in Simonides' time or even earlier. You, although you're experienced in many other things, appear to be inexperienced in this one, unlike me; I'm experienced in it as a result of being a pupil of this very Prodicus. And now you seem to me not to understand that Simonides probably wasn't taking this word 'hard' in the same sense you're taking it; it's the same as the way this Prodicus scolds me about the word 'terrible' all the time, when I'm praising either you or someone else and I say 'Protagoras
B is a terribly wise man' and he asks if I'm not ashamed to be calling good things terrible. For anything terrible, he says, is bad. At any rate, no one ever speaks of 'terrible riches' or 'terrible peace' or 'terrible health,' but instead, speaks of a 'terrible disease' and a 'terrible war' and 'terrible poverty,' as if what's terrible is bad. So probably with 'hard' too, Simonides and the people of Ceos take it either as something bad or as something else you don't understand. So let's ask Prodicus—for in justice, he's the one to ask about Simonides' dialect.
C What did Simonides mean by 'hard,' Prodicus?" "Bad," he said.

"Then that's also the reason, Prodicus," I said, "why he blames Pittacus for saying it's hard to be good; it's just as if he heard him saying that it's bad to be good." "Well what else besides that do you imagine Simonides meant, Socrates?" he said; "he was reproaching Pittacus because he didn't know the right way to distinguish the words, seeing as how he was from Lesbos and brought up in a barbarous dialect." "Are you listening to Prodicus here, Protagoras," I said, "and do you have anything to say in response to that?" And **D** Protagoras said, "That's a long way off from the way it is, Prodicus. I know perfectly well that Simonides meant the very same thing by 'hard' that all the rest of us do, not 'bad' but whatever is not easy but comes only through a lot of trouble." "That's just what I too imagine Simonides meant, Protagoras," I said, "and I'm sure Prodicus here knows it too and is being playful; he seems to be testing you to see if you'll be able to defend your own argument. There's a big indication in the line right after that one that Simonides didn't mean 'bad' by **E** 'hard,' for he says that

A god alone should have this privilege.

Presumably he couldn't mean by this that it's bad to be good, and then go on to claim that the god alone would have this thing and assign it as a privilege for the god alone, since then Prodicus would say Simonides was some sort of degenerate and no fit representative of Ceos. But I'm willing to tell you what Simonides' thinking seems to me to be in this ode, if you want to put me to the test on how I stand **342A** in the matter of verses, as you refer to this; or if you'd like to speak, I'll listen to you." So Protagoras, as he heard me say that, said, "If that's what you want, Socrates," but Prodicus and Hippias, the pair of them, were quite insistent, and so were all the rest.

"All right, then," I said, "I'll try to explain for you all what seems to me to be going on in this ode. Now philosophy is most ancient and most widespread among the Greeks in Crete and in Sparta, and **B** the greatest number of sophists on earth are there. But they deny it completely and play dumb, so it won't be obvious that they hold dominance over the Greeks by means of wisdom—just like those sophists Protagoras was talking about—and they'll seem instead to be dominant as a result of warfare and courage, in the belief that, if it were known that the source of their dominance was wisdom, everyone would take up training in that. The way things are, by concealing that, they've completely fooled the Sparta-enthusiasts in our cities, so that some of their imitators get their ears broken, wrap their hands **C** in leather straps, devote themselves to training in the gym, and run around in short smocks, as if these were the things that made the Spartans prevail among the Greeks. Meanwhile, when the Spartans want to mingle freely with the sophists in their midst, and get to be annoyed at

having to associate with them in secret, they issue deportation orders for those Sparta-enthusiasts and any other foreigners who might be in town, and get together with the sophists without the foreigners
D knowing it. And they don't allow any of their young people to go out into other cities, something the Cretans as well don't do, so they won't unlearn the things they themselves have taught them. And it's not only the men in these cities who set great store by education, but also the women. And you can recognize that I'm telling the truth about this, and that the Spartans are the people best educated in philosophy and arguments, in the following way. For if anyone cares to associate with the most insignificant of the Spartans, he'll find for the most part
E that in his talk he is to all appearance just some insignificant fellow, but then at some random point in what he's saying, like a fearsomely accurate javelin-thrower, he tosses in a remark worthy of note, short and pithy, leaving the person he's disputing with appearing no better than a child. And there are some people nowadays and some among the ancients who've noticed this very thing, that being like a Spartan is much more a matter of devotion to philosophy than of devotion to training in the gym, realizing that being capable of uttering such
343A remarks is the mark of a perfectly educated human being. Among these were Thales of Miletus, Pittacus of Mytilene, Bias of Priene, our own Solon, Cleobulus of Lindus, Myson of Chen, and seventh in this list[9] Chilon, said to be a Spartan. These men were all zealous admirers, passionate lovers, and students of Spartan education, and one can learn what sort of wisdom belonged to them from the short,
B memorable sayings spoken by each; they also gathered together and dedicated the first fruits of their wisdom in common to Apollo at the temple in Delphi, engraving those things that everyone recites: 'Know thyself,' and 'Nothing to excess.'

"To what purpose am I telling you this? Because this was the style of philosophy among the ancients, a Spartan brevity of speech, and this remark of Pittacus in particular was circulated privately among
C the wise with high praise: 'It's hard to be good.' So Simonides, who was ambitious for honor about wisdom, realized that if he could bring down this saying and come out on top of it, as if it were a famous athlete, he himself would gain fame among the human beings of that time. So he composed the whole ode against this saying, and for this purpose, scheming by this means to cut it down to size; that's how it appears to me.

"So let's all examine in common whether I'm speaking the truth in this. Now right at the start of the ode, it would appear crazy if one
D who wanted to say that it's hard for a man to become good were then to stick in an 'ah, but.' For there doesn't seem to be a single reason for this to have been stuck in unless one assumes Simonides is saying it in

9 Of the Seven Sages, ancient wise men who left no writings but were known for brief sayings.

response to the remark of Pittacus, as someone contesting it: Pittacus says that it's hard to be good, and disputing that, he's saying 'No it isn't—ah, but to *become* good is hard, Pittacus, truly so.' Not truly good, it's not in that sense that he means the 'in truth,' as though there were some people who are truly good, and others who are good but not **E** truly good—because that would appear silly and that's not Simonides' style—but one must take the 'in truth' in the ode as displaced, as a way of invoking the saying of Pittacus as a preface, as if we had Pittacus himself stating it and Simonides saying in reply, thus: 'Human beings, it's hard to be good,' and the responder says, 'Pittacus, you're **344A** not stating the truth, for it's not *being* good that's hard for a man; ah, but *becoming* good, built squarely in hands, feet, and mind, beyond reproach, *that* is hard in truth.' In this way it becomes apparent that the 'ah, but' is stuck in for a reason and the 'in truth' is rightly placed at the end; and everything that comes after this bears out that this is the sense in which he's saying it. Now there are many points in connection with each of the things said to demonstrate how well the ode **B** is composed—for it's quite charmingly and carefully done—but it would be a long business to go through it that way. Let's just go over its outline and intention as a whole, to show that throughout the whole of the ode it is above all a rebuttal to the saying of Pittacus.

"Now he goes on to say, a little after this, as if he were stating an argument, that while it's hard in truth for a man to become good, though possible for at least a certain length of time, nevertheless, to remain in this condition once one has come into it and *be* a good man **C** is, as you, Pittacus, say, not humanly possible, but a god alone could have this privilege,

> And for a man there is no way not to be bad,
> When irresistible misfortune brings him down.

So who is it that irresistible misfortune brings down in regard to ruling a ship? Obviously not the ordinary person, since the ordinary person is always down. It's the same way as one can't knock down someone who was lying down; one can knock down someone who was standing up at the time, so as to make him be lying down, but not someone who was lying down. So too, irresistible misfortune can **D** bring down someone who was good at resisting things at the time, but not someone who was always helpless to resist anything; a great storm that overtakes a helmsman might make him helpless to resist, and a hard season that comes along might render a farmer helpless to resist, and the same things could happen to a doctor. There's room for one who's good to become bad, as is attested also by some other poet, who says

> A good man is still bad sometimes, but good at others.

E But there's no room for one who's bad to get that way; it's just a necessity for him always to be that way. So when irresistible misfortune brings down someone who's good at resisting and a wise and good person, there's no way not to be bad. But you, Pittacus, claim it's hard to be good; now it *is* hard, but in one's power, to become good, but one has no power to *be* that way.

> For any man who acts well is good,
> But bad if he acts badly.

345A Now what is a good action in regard to written words, and what makes a man good in regard to them? Obviously learning them. And what way of acting well makes someone a good doctor? Obviously, learning about the treatment of those who are sick. And bad, badly: well, then, who would become a bad doctor? Obviously, someone who already *is* a doctor in the first place, and secondly a good doctor, since he's the one who could also become a bad one, while we who are ordinary people when it comes to medical knowledge could at no **B** time, by acting badly, become either doctors or carpenters or anything else of the sort. And obviously anyone who couldn't become a doctor by acting badly couldn't become a bad doctor either. And in the same way, a good man can also become bad at some time, through the action of time or being worn down or being sick or some other of fortune's blows, for this is the only way of acting badly: by being deprived of knowledge. But a bad man could not *become* bad at any time, since he always *is* that way; if he were going to become bad, he'd have to become good first. So this part of the ode also tends to this conclusion, **C** that it's not possible to be a good man and stay good to the end, but is possible to become good and for the same person to become bad, 'and they're best longest whom the gods love.'

"So all these things are said in response to Pittacus, and the things that go on from there make this even more clear. For he says,

> Wherefore for what cannot come to pass, never shall I
> Throw away my allotted span on a vain, unattainable hope,
> That any of us who partake of the fruit of wide earth will be
> A wholly blameless human being; in case I find one, I'll tell you.

D That's what he says, and through the whole ode he stays strongly on the attack against the saying of Pittacus in this same vein:

> I give my praise and love to all those
> Who do no shameful deed willingly,
> But not even gods fight against necessity.

This is said to the same purpose. For Simonides was not so misguided in his education as to claim to be praising those people who do no evil of their own will, as if there were any people who *do* evil willingly. Because one thing I'm pretty sure of is this, that none of the wise men thought any human being willingly goes astray or willingly **E** does shameful and evil deeds; they knew well that everyone who does shameful and evil things does them unwillingly. And Simonides in particular isn't claiming that someone who does no evil willingly is to be praised for that; he means this 'willingly' to apply to himself. He held the opinion that a good, well-bred man often forces himself to become someone's friend and to praise him; this often happens, for **346A** instance, to a man with an adoptive mother or father or fatherland, or anything else of that sort. With people of a bad sort, when something like that happens to them, it's as if they took pleasure in seeing the faults of their parents or fatherland, flaunting their criticisms and making accusations, so human beings won't charge them with neglecting their parents or blame them for the fact that they do. So there's still more to rebuke them for, and to their unvavoidable antagonisms they **B** add others they incur voluntarily. Good people are forced to cover up their feelings and give praise, and if they get angry over anything when they're treated unjustly by their parents or fatherland, they console and reconcile themselves, and force themselves to love and praise their own people. And I imagine Simonides too often felt that he himself had praised and extolled either a tyrant or someone else of that sort, not willingly but forcing himself. And this is exactly what he says to Pittacus, 'I'm not faulting you just because I like finding **C** fault, Pittacus, since

> Anyone who's not evil is good enough for me, anyone
> Not too out of control, who knows what's right makes a city thrive,
> Is a wholesome man—I have no complaint against him.

I have no fondness for criticism,

> For the race of fools is beyond all counting,

so if anyone delights in casting blame, he'd get his fill by finding fault with *them*,

> For surely all things are beautiful that have no mixture of the shameful in them.'

He does not mean this in the same sense as if one said, for surely **D** all things are white that have no mixture of black in them—that would be ridiculous on several counts—but in the sense that he's accepting

enough toward the middle sort to cast no blame. He's saying 'I'm not looking for a wholly blameless human being among all those who partake of the fruit of the wide earth, but in case I find one I'll tell you; on that basis I wouldn't have anyone to praise, but it's good enough for me if someone is of the middle sort and does no evil, since I give
E my praise and love to all those.' And here he uses the dialect of the Mytileneans because it's to Pittacus that he's addressing the 'I give my praise and love to all those willingly'—and one must take him as meaning the 'willingly' here in this clause—'those who do no shameful deed, though there are people I praise and love unwillingly. So I
347A would never blame you, Pittacus, if you were saying something even moderately reasonable and true; but as things are, you're believed to be telling the truth when you're exceptionally wrong, and about things of the greatest importance, and I do blame you for that.' That's what it seems to me, Prodicus and Protagoras," I said, "Simonides was thinking when he composed this ode."

And Hippias said, "And a good exposition of the ode you've given,
B Socrates, it seems to me. I, however, also have an explanation of it that's good, which I shall display to you if you'd like." And Alcibiades said, "Yes, Hippias, but some other time. Now, though, justice calls for the things Protagoras and Socrates, the pair of them, agreed on between them, for Protagoras to ask questions if he wishes, and Socrates to give answers, or if he wishes to give answers to Socrates, for the other to ask them." And I said, "I leave that up to Protagoras, whichever way pleases him more. But if he wishes, let's leave aside
C what has to do with odes and verses; but as for the things I asked you about first, Protagoras, I'd be pleased to get to a conclusion by examining them with you. For having a conversation about poetry seems to me to be a lot like the drinking parties held by the ordinary human beings one finds around the marketplace. Because those people, due to their lack of education, have no power to be in one another's company by themselves during their drinking, using their
D own voice and their own speeches, they put a high value on flute girls, paying big prices to hire the alien voice of the flutes, and that's the voice they spend their time together listening to. But where those who drink together are educated people of good stock and beautiful character, you wouldn't see flute girls, dancing girls, or girls strumming on strings; you'll see people with adequate resources of their own to be together without these childish diversions, using their own voice, speaking and listening in turn among themselves in an orderly
E manner even when they're drinking a very large amount of wine. And when such gatherings take place among men of the sort most of us claim to be, there is likewise no need for an alien voice from among the poets either, who can't be questioned about what they mean; the general run of people bring them up in their speeches, some claiming the poet thinks this and that, others claiming he thinks something

else, arguing back and forth about a matter they have no power to put to the test. Those others, however, let gatherings of *that* sort go **348A**
their merry way, and hold their gatherings among themselves with their own resources, testing one another through the give and take of their own speeches. They're the sort of people it seems to me that you and I should prefer to imitate, leaving the poets to themselves in order to make our speeches to each other by ourselves, on our own, taking up the speeches to put the truth and ourselves to the test. And if you still want to ask the questions, I'm ready to submit to you by answering them; or if you'd like, you submit to me, about the things we were in the middle of when we stopped going through them, so we can put a conclusion to them."

Now when I'd said these things and others of the same sort, **B**
Protagoras gave no clear indication of what he intended to do. So Alcibiades looked at Callias and said, "Does this seem like a beautiful thing for Protagoras to be doing now, Callias, when he's unwilling either to give an account or to make it clear that he won't? It doesn't seem that way to me. Let him either have a conversation or say that he's unwilling to have a conversation, so we can all know this about him, and Socrates, or anyone else who wants to, can have a conversation with someone else." And Protagoras was ashamed of himself, **C**
the way it seemed to me anyway, with Alcibiades speaking that way and Callias, along with pretty much everyone else who was there, begging him, and with a lot of resistance he let himself be prodded into having a conversation, and he called for questions to be asked so he himself could answer.

So I said, "Protagoras, don't imagine that I'm having this conversation with you for any other reason than because I want to examine things that I myself am puzzled by whenever they come up. For I believe that there's a lot in what Homer says, **D**

> When two go along together, one notices something ahead of the other,

for we human beings are all more resourceful then somehow, in every deed, word, and thought. And 'if one notices something alone,' he immediately goes around looking until he happens across someone he can display it to and with whom he can get it confirmed. In just this way and for just this reason, I too am glad to be having a conversation with you more than anyone else, since I regard you as the best person to examine everything else that it's reasonable for a reasonable **E**
person to look into, and especially virtue. Who better than you? Not only do you believe yourself to be good and of beautiful character, the way some others do who are decent themselves but lack the power to make other people that way, but you are both good yourself and able to make others good, and you are so confident of yourself that while

349A others hide this art, you, appearing out in the open, advertise yourself to all the Greeks, take on yourself the name of sophist, announce yourself as a teacher who imparts education and virtue, and are the first who has considered himself worthy of charging a fee for this. How then could one not be bound to summon you to this inquiry, to ask you questions, and to get you to share your thoughts? There's no way *not* to.

"Now about those things that I was asking about these matters at first, I desire to be reminded of some points by you again from **B** the beginning, and for us to examine others together. The question, I believe, was this: do wisdom, moderation, courage, justice, and piety, which are five in name, refer to one thing, or is there some particular being and thing underlying each of these names, each having its own power, with no one of them the same sort of thing as another? Now **C** you were claiming they aren't names for one thing, but each of these names applies to a particular thing, and all of them are parts of virtue, not in the way that parts of gold are the same sorts of things as one another and as the whole of which they're parts, but in the way that parts of a face are dissimilar to one another and to the whole of which they're parts, each having a particular power. If these things still seem to you the way they did then, say so, but if they seem different in any way, then delineate that difference, since I won't hold you accountable for anything you said then if you say something in any way different **D** now; I wouldn't be surprised if you were saying those things then just to test me." "All right, then, Socrates," he said, "I say to you that these are all parts of virtue, and that four of them are reasonably close to one another, while courage is very much different from all the rest. You'll recognize that what I say is true from this: you'll find a lot of human beings who are very unjust, very impious, very self-indulgent, and very unintelligent, yet courageous to an exceptional degree."

E "Hold it right there," I said, "because what you're saying is surely worth examining. By 'courageous,' do you mean audacious, or something else?" "Yes," he said, "people keen to go where most people are afraid to go." "Keep going, then; you claim virtue is a beautiful thing, and you hold yourself out as a teacher of it on the basis of its being a beautiful thing?" "The most beautful thing, in fact," he said, "unless I'm crazy, anyway." "And is it part ugly and part beautiful," I said, "or is the whole of it beautiful?" "The whole, beyond any doubt, is as beautiful as anything can be." "And do you know which **350A** people audaciously dive into wells?" "I do; the divers." "Because they know what they're doing, or for some other reason?" "Because they know what they're doing." "And which people are audacious about fighting from horseback? The horsemen, or those with no horsmanship?" "The horsemen." "And which people at fighting with light shields? The light-infantrymen or those who lack that skill?" "The light-infantrymen. And in all other activities, if that's what you're

getting at," he said, "people who know what they're doing are more audacious than people who don't, and they themselves are more audacious after they've learned them than before they learned them." "But have you ever seen any people," I said, "who are audacious about *all* those things, even though they have no knowledge of any of them?" "I have," he said, "the ones who are too audacious." "And are *these* audacious people courageous too?" "Courage would be a shameful thing indeed if they were," he said, "since these people are crazy." "Well, then," I said, "in what sense do you mean they're courageous? Didn't you say they're audacious?" "I do now too," he said. "So then doesn't it plainly appear," I said, "that people who are audacious in *that* way are crazy rather than courageous? And in those other cases, the wisest are also the most audacious, and since they're the most audacious, the most courageous? And by this argument, wisdom would be courage?"

"You're not remembering very beautifully what I was saying and what answer I was giving you, Socrates," he said. "I, when asked by you if the courageous are audacious, agreed they are. I was not asked if the audacious are also courageous; if you had asked me that at the time, I would have said that not all of them are, but as for the courageous not being audacious, nowhere have you shown that my agreement was not rightly made when I agreed they are. Next, you declare those who know what they're doing to be more audacious than they themselves were before, and than others who don't know, and you imagine on that basis that courage and wisdom are the same thing. But if you take that way of thinking a step further, you might also imagine that strength is wisdom. For, going on in that way, if you asked me first whether the strong are powerful, I'd say they are; next, whether those who know how to wrestle are more powerful than those who don't know how to wrestle, and they themselves are more powerful when they've learned it than they were before they learned, I'd say they are; and when I'd agreed to these things, you'd have an opening, taking these same things as evidence, to say that according to what I'd agreed, wisdom is strength. But nowhere, and certainly not here, am I agreeing that the powerful are strong, even though the strong are powerful; for power and strength are not the same thing. The one, power, comes from knowledge, and from craziness and spiritedness as well, while strength comes from nature along with good nurture of bodies. So too, in the other case, audacity and courage are not the same thing; so what follows is that the courageous are audacious, but the audacious are still not all courageous. For audacity comes to human beings from artfulness, and from spiritedness and craziness as well, just as power does, while courage comes from nature along with good nurture of souls."

"And do you say, Protagoras," I said, "that some human beings live well and others badly?" He said he did. "And does it seem to you that

a human being is living well if he lives in pain and suffering?" He said it didn't. "But what if he were to get to the end of his life having lived pleasantly? Does it not seem to you that in that case he would have
C lived his life well?" "It does to me," he said. "Therefore it's good to live pleasantly and bad to live unpleasantly." "So long as it's beautiful things that one lives his life taking pleasure in," he said. "What, Protagoras? You don't mean that you too, like the general run of people, call some pleasant things bad and some painful ones good? I mean, insofar as things are pleasant, aren't they good in that respect, apart from anything else that might result from them? And on the other side, aren't painful things bad in just the same way, to the extent they're painful?" "I don't know, Socrates," he said, "whether the question is
D one I ought to answer in so simplistic a way as you ask it, taking all pleasant things as good and all painful ones bad. It seems to me safer for me to reply, in connection not only with the present answer but also with all the rest of my life, that there are among pleasant things some that are not good, while among painful things in turn there are some that are not bad, some that are, and a third sort that are neither bad nor good." "But aren't you calling pleasant," I said, "the things
E that have some pleasure in them or produce pleasure?" "Quite so," he said. "Well, that's what I'm talking about; when I ask 'aren't things good to the extent they're pleasant?' I'm asking whether pleasure itself isn't a good thing." "It's just as you keep saying all the time, Socrates," he said; "let's examine it, and if the point under examination seems to be agreeable to reason, and the pleasant and the good appear to be the same thing, then we'll get together on that, but if not, that will be the time when we'll debate it." "Which way do you want to do it, then," I said; "do you want to lead the examination, or shall I?" "The just thing is for you to lead it," he said, "since you're the one starting the discussion."

352A "All right, then," I said, "would this make things clear for us? Suppose someone was examining a human being by his looks, in connection either with health or with any of the other workings of the body; he'd look at the face and hands and say 'Come on then, uncover your chest and back and show them to me, so I can make a clearer examination.' I too have a desire for something like that in our examination. Now that I behold the condition you're in on the matter of the good and the pleasant, that it's the way you say, I feel the need
B to say something like, 'Come on then, Protagoras, and uncover this part of your thinking for me as well: what condition are you in on the matter of knowledge? Does this too seem to you the same way it does to the general run of human beings, or some other way? The way it seems to most people about knowledge is something along the lines that it's not a strong or guiding or ruling thing, and since they don't think of it as being of that sort, when knowledge is present in a human being, as it often is, they think it's not his knowledge that rules

him but something else, sometimes spiritedness, sometimes pleasure, sometimes pain, occasionally lust, frequently fear, literally thinking C
of knowledge as they would of a slave that can be dragged around by everything else.' So is something like that the way it seems about it to you too, or does knowledge seem to you to be a beautiful thing of such a kind as to rule a human being, that if one recognizes what's good and bad, he won't be prevailed on by anything to do anything other than what knowledge tells him to do, and that intelligence is strong enough to provide support to a human being?" "It seems just the way you say, Socrates," he said, "and at the same time, for me, if D
anyone, it would be shameful not to claim wisdom and knowledge are the most powerful of all things in human affairs."

"That's a beautiful thing for you to say," I said, "and a true one. Now you know that the general run of human beings aren't persuaded by me and you, but claim that many people who recognize what's best aren't willing to act on it, though it's open to them to do so, but act from other motives. And all those I've asked what in the world the cause of this is, claim it's from being overcome by pleasure or pain, or E
being overpowered by one of those things I was just now speaking of, that those who do these things do them." "Well, Socrates," he said, "I assume human beings say a lot of other things too that aren't right." "Come on, then, and make an effort with me to persuade human beings and teach them what this experience they have is, which they claim is being overcome by pleasures, and on account of them not 353A
acting on what's best, even though they recognize what that is. For when we say 'You're not speaking rightly, human beings, but getting it wrong,' they'll probably say to us 'Protagoras and Socrates, if this experience isn't being overcome by pleasure, then what in the world is it, and what do you folks say it is? Tell us, the pair of you.'" "What, Socrates? Do we have to examine the opinion of the general run of human beings? Whatever happens to strike them, that's what they say." "I believe," I said, "that there's something in it to help us find B
out about courage, about what relation it might have toward the other parts of virtue. So if it seems good to you to stand by the things that were seeming good to us just now, that I should lead in the direction I believe will make this come into appearance in the most beautiful way, then follow. But if you don't want to, I'll let it go, if that's what you'd like." "No," he said, "you're speaking rightly. Finish it off the same way you began."

"Once again, then," I said, "if they were to ask us, 'What do C
you folks claim this is, which we were saying is being weaker than pleasures?' *I*'d speak to them in this way: 'Just listen, and Protagoras and I will try to explain it to you. Are you claiming, human beings, that anything happens to you other than this, and in these cases, that you're often overpowered by some sort of food or drink or sex, which are pleasant, and you recognize they're worthless but act on

them nonetheless?'" "They would say so." "Then you and I would
D ask them again, 'In what sense are you saying they're worthless? Is it because each of them causes that pleasure, or is itself pleasant, at the moment, or because it produces illnesses and poverty on into the time afterward, and leaves you stocked with many other things like that? Would any of them still be bad even if it left you with no consequences afterward, but only made you feel enjoyment, for the sole reason that it made you feel enjoyment of one sort or another? Do we imagine, Protagoras, that they'd give any other answer than that they're bad
E not for the action of the pleasure itself at the moment, but on account of the things that come afterward, illnesses and so on?" "I imagine," Protagoras said, "the general run of people would give that answer." "And by causing illnesses they cause pains, and by causing poverty they cause pains? I imagine they'd agree." Protagoras joined in saying that. "So does it appear to you, human beings, as Protagoras and I are claiming, that these are bad for no other reason than because they end
354A up in pains and deprive you of other pleasures? Would you agree?" It seemed that way to the pair of us. "So what if we were to put the question to them again in the opposite way: 'Human beings, you who also speak of good things as being painful, don't you mean that such things as gymnastic and military exercises, and treatments by doctors that take place by means of burning and cutting and medicines and starvation diets, are good things, but painful?' Would they say that?"
B It seemed that way to him too. "'Then is this the reason you folks are calling them good, because they produce extreme suffering and pains at the moment, or because, on into the time afterward, healthy and fit conditions of the body arise from them, and safety of cities, supremacy over others, and riches?' I imagine they'd say that." It seemed that way to him too. "'And are these things good for any other reason than because they end up in pleasures while freeing you from pains
C and warding them off? Or can you state any other end you're looking off toward when you folks call them good, apart from pleasures and pains?' I imagine they'd say they couldn't." "It seems that way to me too," Protagoras said. "'Then you folks pursue pleasure in the belief that it's good, and avoid pain in the belief that it's bad?'" It seemed that way to him too. "'Therefore this is what you folks regard as bad, the pain, and the pleasure as good, since you say that even feeling enjoyment itself is bad when it deprives you of greater pleasures than the ones it contains, or leaves you stocked with pains greater than the
D pleasures present in it, seeing as how, if it was for any other reason that you were calling the feeling of enjoyment itself bad, and there was any other end you were looking off to, you could tell us what that is; but you can't.'" "They seem that way to me too," Protagoras said. "'And is it any different again with the feeling of pain itself, or the same way? Do you folks call the feeling of pain itself good when it either frees you from pains greater than those present in it or leaves

you stocked with pleasures greater than the pains? Since, if you were looking off toward some other end when you call the feeling pain itself good, other than to the one I say you are, you could tell us what it is; but you can't.'" "You're telling the truth," said Protagoras. E

"Once again, then," I said, "if you human beings were to ask me, 'Why in the world are you talking about this so much and going on at such length?' I'd say 'Look at it my way: in the first place it's not easy to demonstrate what in the world this is that you call being weaker than pleasures, and then all our demonstrations are contained in that one. But it's still possible, even now, to change course if you have any way of saying the good is anything other than pleasure, or the bad is anything other than pain. Or is it enough for you to live out your life pleasantly, without pain? If that *is* enough, and you have nothing else to say is good or bad that doesn't end up being these, then listen to what follows from that. For I tell you, if that's the way it is for you on that score, your statement becomes ridiculous when you say that often a human being, recognizing bad things as being bad, acts on them nonetheless, when it's possible for him not to act on them, because he's led by pleasures and knocked off course by them. And you folks say, in turn, that a human being who recognizes what's good is unwilling to act on it due to the pleasures of the moment, because he's overcome by them. It will be perfectly obvious that these claims are ridiculous if we don't use a lot of different names at the same time, pleasant and painful and good and bad, but since it plainly appears that there are two things here, let's also call them by one pair of names, first good and bad, and then in turn pleasant and painful. Putting it that way, let's say that a human being, recognizing bad things as being bad, does them nonetheless. And if someone asks us, 'Why?' we'll say because he's overcome. 'By what?' that person will ask us, and it is no longer possible for us to say by pleasure, since this has had its name changed to something else, the good instead of pleasure. So let's give that person his answer and say 'Because he's overcome,' and he'll say 'By what,' and we, by Zeus!, will say, 'By the good.' Now if the one asking us the question happens to be an insolent type, he'll laugh and say, 'What a ludicrous thing you folks are saying, if you claim someone does bad things, recognizing that they're bad, not having to do them, because he's overpowered by good things.' He'll say 'Is this when the good things aren't worth enough to win out in you over the bad things, or when they are?' Obviously, when we answer, we'll say that it's when they aren't worth enough; otherwise the person we claim is weaker than pleasures wouldn't have made a mistake. Then maybe he'll say, 'But in what sense are good things worth less than bad ones or bad than good? Is it in any other sense than that one sort are greater and the other less, or one sort more in number and the other fewer?' We won't have anything other than that to say. 'Therefore it's clear,' he'll

355A B C D E

say, 'that by this "being overcome" you folks mean taking greater evils in place of lesser goods.' So that's how that stands.

"Now let's go back and substitute the names pleasant and painful for these same things, and let's say that a human being does what we were then calling bad things, but now let's call them painful things,
356A recognizing that they're painful, because he's overcome by pleasant things, when it's obvious that they're not worth enough to win out. And what other way is there for pleasure not to be worth as much as pain except their excess and deficiency in relation to one another? And this is the case when they turn out to be greater and lesser than one another, or more and fewer, or more and less intense. For if someone were to say 'But there's a big difference, Socrates, between what's pleasant at the moment and what's pleasant or painful at a later time,' I'd say 'But surely not in any respect other than in pleasure and pain?
B Because there's no other way for them to differ. But just like a human being who's good at setting things in the scales, when you've put in the pleasant things and put the painful ones in with them, and set what's near and far in balance, say which side is more. For if you set pleasant things against pleasant things, those that are greater and more are always to be taken, if painful things against painful things, those that are less and fewer, and if it's pleasant versus painful things, if the painful ones are outweighed by the pleasant ones, whether near by far off or far off by near, that action is to be undertaken in which
C the latter are present; but where the pleasant things are outweighed by the painful ones, those actions are not to be undertaken. Can these things be any other way than that, human beings?' I'd say. I know that they'd have no other way to say they are." And it seemed so to him as well.

"'Well since that's the way it is, answer me this,' I'll say. 'Do the same magnitudes appear larger to you folks by sight from nearby and smaller from far away or not?' They'll say they do. 'And is it the same way with thickness and multitude? And do equal sounds also appear greater from nearby and smaller from far away?' They'd say
D so. 'So if doing well consisted for us in this, in acting on and taking large distances while avoiding and not acting on small ones, what would appear to us as our salvation in life? Would it be the art of measurement or the power of what appears? Didn't the latter lead us astray and make us mistake the same things back and forth over and over again and have regrets in both our actions and our choices of large and small things, when measurement would have deprived
E this appearance of its authority, and, by revealing what was true, would have made our soul hold itself at rest, abiding in truth, and would have been the salvation of our life?' In response to this, would human beings agree that measurement is the art that keeps us safe, or say it's some other?" "Measurement," he agreed. "'And what if the salvation of our life consisted for us in choosing what was odd or

even, either in itself in relation to itself or one thing in numerical ratio to another, whenever it was necessary to choose the greater rightly as well as when it was necessary to choose the lesser, whether it was nearby or far away? What would save our life for us? Wouldn't it be 357A knowledge? And wouldn't it be a certain kind of measurement, seeing as how the art is concerned with excess and deficiency? And since it's concerned with odd and even, would it be anything other than arithmetic?' Would human beings agree with us or not?" It seemed to Protagoras too that they'd agree.

"'So be it, human beings. Now since the salvation of our life has plainly appeared to us as consisting in a right choice of pleasure and pain, of the greater and lesser, larger and smaller, farther and nearer, B doesn't it appear first of all as an art of measurement, since it is an examination of their excess, deficiency, and equality in relation to one another?'" "Necessarily so." "'And since it's an art of measurement, it's no doubt by necessity an art and knowledge.'" "They join in saying so." "'What sort of art and knowledge this is, we'll look into some other time, but this much, the fact that it *is* knowledge, is sufficient for the demonstration which Protagoras and I had to give about the things C you folks asked us. If you recall, you asked the question at the point when *we* agreed with each other that there is nothing more powerful than knowledge, but this always prevails, wherever it's present, over pleasure and everything else. But you folks claimed that pleasure often prevails even over a human being who has knowledge, and when we disagreed with you, you asked us after that, "Protagoras and Socrates, if this experience isn't being overcome by pleasure, what in the world is it, and what do you folks claim it is? *You* tell us." Now if at that time D we'd said to you straight off, "Ignorance," you'd have laughed us, but if you laugh at us now you'll be laughing at yourselves. Because you folks have also agreed that those who go astray in choosing pleasant and painful things—that is, good and bad things—do so through a defect of knowledge, and not merely of knowledge but of a knowledge you've further agreed just now is an art of measurement. And an action that goes astray in the absence of knowledge, you yourselves E surely know is committed through ignorance. So this is what being weaker than pleasure is, the utmost in ignorance, for which Protagoras here claims to be a doctor, and so do Prodicus and Hippias. But from assuming that it's something other than ignorance, you yourselves don't go to or send your children to the teachers who deal with these matters, these sophists here, thinking it's not something teachable, but by worrying about money and not giving it to these people, you folks do badly in private and in public.'

"These are the things we would have said in reply to the general 358A run of people. But as for you, Hippias and Prodicus, and Protagoras with you—for let the statement be yours in common—I ask you whether I seem to be speaking the truth or getting it wrong." It

seemed to them all that what had been said was preternaturally true. "You folks agree, therefore," I said, "that what's pleasant is good and what's painful is bad. And I ask to be spared the distinction among names Prodicus here would make. For whether you say pleasant or agreeable or delightful, or by whatever derivation or in whatever
B manner you take delight in naming that sort of things, most excellent Prodicus, answer me according to what I mean." Prodicus, with a laugh, joined in agreement, and the others did too. "And what about this, gentlemen?" I said. "Aren't all actions aimed at this, at living painlessly and pleasantly, beautiful? And isn't a beautiful deed good and advantageous?" It seemed so to them in common. "Therefore," I said, "if what's pleasant is good, no one who knows or believes other
C things, that are in his power, are better than the things he's doing, goes on doing them afterward when it's open to him to do better ones. And this 'being weaker than oneself' is nothing other than ignorance, and being stronger than oneself is nothing other than wisdom." So it seemed to them all in common. "And what about this ignorance you folks are talking about? Is it having false opinion and being wrong about matters worthy of great concern?" This too seemed so to them all in common. "Is it not the case, then," I said, "that no one willingly makes his way toward bad things or toward things he believes are
D bad, and that it's likely not in human nature to do this, to be willing to go toward things one believes are bad instead of toward good things? When one is forced to choose one or the other of a pair of evils, no one will choose the greater evil when it's open to him to choose the lesser, will he?" All these things seemed so to all of us in common.

"What about this?" I said. "Is there something you folks call fear or terror? And is it the same thing I mean? (I'm speaking to you, Prodicus.) I mean by this a certain anticipation of something bad, whether you folks call it terror or fear." It seemed to Protagoras and
E Hippias that this is fear or terror, but to Prodicus that it's fear and not terror. "But it makes no difference, Prodicus," I said. "But this does: if the previous things are true, is there any human being who'll be willing to go toward those things he's afraid of, when it's open to him to go toward those he's not afraid of? Or is that impossible, based on the things that have been agreed to? For it's been agreed that what people are afraid of, they regard as bad, and that no one either goes toward or willingly takes up things he regards as bad." These things
359A too seemed so to them all.

"Now, Prodicus and Hippias, with these things being set down in this way," I said, "let Protagoras here give us his defense to show how the answer he gave at first is right—not the answer that was absolutely first, for then he said that of the five parts there are of virtue, no one of them is of the same sort as another, but each has its own particular power; I'm not talking about that, but about what he said
B afterward. For he said later that four of them are reasonably close to

one another, but one, courage, is very much different from the rest, and he said I'd recognize that by this piece of evidence: 'You'll find, Socrates, human beings who are very impious, very unjust, very self-indulgent, and very unintelligent, yet courageous to an exceptional degree, by which you'll recognize that courage is much different from the other parts of virtue.' And I was quite amazed right at the time at his answer, and still more so when I went over these things with you folks. So I asked him if he called courageous people audacious, and he said 'Yes, and keen to go forward.' Do you remember giving these answers, Protagoras?" I said. He agreed he did. C

"Keep going, then," I said, "and tell us, what is it you say courageous people are keen to go forward toward? Is it what cowards are keen to go toward?" "No," he said. "So it's toward something different?" "Yes," he said. "Do cowards go toward audacious things and courageous people toward frightening ones?" "So it's said, Socrates, by human beings." "What you say is true," I said, "but that's not what I'm asking; what do *you* claim courageous people are keen to go toward? Is it toward frightening things, which they regard as being frightening, or toward things that are not frightening?" "But *that*," he said, "was just now demonstrated to be impossible in the arguments *you* were making." "This too that you say is true," I said. "So if this was demonstrated rightly, no one goes toward things he regards as being frightening, since being weaker than oneself was found to be ignorance." He agreed. "So then in turn all people go toward things they're audacious about, cowards and courageous people alike, and in that respect at least, cowards and courageous people go toward the same things." "But surely, Socrates," he said, "it's completely opposite things that cowards and courageous people go toward. For a start, one sort are willing to go into war, but the other sort are unwilling." "And is it a beautiful or a shameful thing to go?" I said. "A beautiful thing," he said. "So if it's beautiful, we agreed in what came before that it's also good, since we agreed that all beautiful actions are good." "What you say is true, and it always seems so to me in any case." "And rightly so," I said. "But which sort of people do you claim are unwilling to go into war, even though it's a beautiful and good thing?" "Cowards," he said. D E 360A

"And if it's beautiful and good," I said, "it's also pleasant?" "So it's been agreed, at any rate," he said. "And are cowards unwilling to go toward something that's more beautiful, better, and more pleasant, recognizing that it's so?" "But if we agree to this too," he said, "we'll ruin the things we agreed to before." "And what about a courageous person? Doesn't he go toward something that's more beautiful, better, and more pleasant?" "It's necessary to agree," he said. "And the fears that courageous people feel are never shameful fears, when they do feel fear, nor is the audacity they feel shameful audacity?" "That's true," he said. "And if it's not shameful, isn't it beautiful?" B

He agreed. "And if beautiful, also good?" "Yes." "And cowards, audacious people, and crazy people, on the contrary, feel shameful fears and their audacity is shameful audacity?" He agreed. "And do they have the audacity to do shameful and bad things on account of anything other than ignorance and lack of intelligence?" "That's how
C it is," he said. "And what about that on account of which cowards are cowards? Do you call that cowardice or courage?" "Cowardice, *I* call it," he said. "And didn't it plainly appear that they're cowards on account of their unintelligence about frightening things?" "Quite so," he said. "Therefore it's on account of this unintelligence that they're cowards?" He agreed. "And that on account of which they're cowards is cowardice—that's agreed to on your part?" He joined in saying so. "So cowardice would be unintelligence about what is and isn't
D frightening?" He nodded. "But surely," I said, "the opposite of cowardice is courage." He said it is. "And wisdom about what is and isn't frightening is the opposite of unintelligence about these things?" Here too again he nodded. "But unintelligence about them is cowardice?" Here he nodded very grudgingly. "Therefore wisdom about what is and isn't frightening, being the opposite of unintelligence about these things, is courage?" Here he was no longer willing even to nod, and was silent. And I said, "Protagoras, why won't you affirm or deny what I'm asking about?" "Finish it yourself," he said. "When I've
E asked you just one more thing," I said: "whether it still seems to you that some human beings are very unintelligent and courageous to an exceptional degree." "To me, Socrates," he said, "you seem determined to come out on top by having me be the one to answer. I'll make you happy, then, and say that it's impossible, on the basis of the things that have been agreed to, for it to seem that way to me."

"I'm certainly not asking all these things," I said, "for any other reason than wanting to examine what in the world is the case with virtue, and what in the world that very thing, virtue, is. For I know
361A that after this has made its appearance, that matter that you and I each have gone on speaking about at length, me saying that virtue is not teachable and you saying that it is, could most effectively get cleared up. And it seems to me that the upshot of the discussion we've just been having is as if a human being were to point his finger and laugh at us, and, if he got a voice, say, 'You guys are pathetic, Socrates and Protagoras! You, for one, after saying at the beginning that virtue is
B not teachable, now get youself rushing off in the opposite direction, trying to demonstrate that everything—justice, moderation, and courage too—is knowledge, which would be the way virtue would appear a teachable thing most of all. For if virtue were anything *other* than knowledge, as Protagoras was trying to say, it would plainly *not* be something teachable; but now if it's going to appear as knowledge through and through, as you're in such a hurry to have it be, Socrates, it'll be a wonder if it's not teachable. But Protagoras, for his part, after

setting it down before as teachable, now on the contrary looks like someone who's in a hurry to have it appear as just about everything **C**
but knowledge, and that way it would least of all be teachable.' So, Protagoras, when I see all these things upside down in such a horrendous mess, I'm all full of eagerness for it to get cleared up, and I'd like for us to go all through these questions in order to go on also to what virtue is, and to examine again in regard to it whether it's teachable or not teachable; that way old Epimetheus won't be able to trip us up so often in our investigation with his deceptions, the same way you **D**
claim he did us out of our share in the distribution. The Prometheus in your story was more to my liking than the Epimetheus; it's in order to consult him and take forethought for the whole of my life that I put so much effort into all these matters, and if you'd be willing, then exactly as I was saying at the beginning, the most pleasant thing for me would be to make a joint examination of them along with you."

And Protagoras said, "I give you credit for your eagerness, Socrates, and for the way you made the arguments come out. I don't think I'm **E**
a bad human being in other ways, and I of all human beings am the least apt to feel envy; in fact I've said about you to many people that I admire you the most by far of the people I've happened to run into, especially those of your age. And I certainly say that I wouldn't be surprised if you should get to be one of the men notable for wisdom. And we'll go over what concerns these subjects another time, whenever you want, but now it's about time to turn to something else."

"That's what one ought to do, then," I said, "if it seems that way **362A**
to you. And it's long since been time for those things I said I had to go to; I was just staying here to palliate[10] Callias." Having said and heard these things, we went away.

10 Literally, "to make the beautiful (or admirable) Callias happy." The reference is to 335D, and Socrates makes the same play on the sound of Callias's name (*Kallia… kalô*) that Alcibiades had made at 336B.

EUTHYDEMUS

Outline of the dialogue

271A-272D Crito asks Socrates about a conversation he saw him having the previous day, but couldn't hear from the back of the crowd. Socrates reports that he was speaking with a pair of brothers from out of town, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. When Crito asks if they are sophists, Socrates says they are all-inclusively wise, having branched out from expertise at fighting in armor to fighting in speeches; Socrates claims he wants to become their student, and invites Crito to join him.

272E-275D Socrates reports that the pair of brothers came over to join him the day before when they saw Cleinias, a popular young man accompanied by a troop of admirers, sit next to him. Euthydemus and Dionysodorus claim that they now teach virtue. Socrates enthusiastically invites them to begin by persuading Cleinias to devote himself to virtue and philosophy. They agree, and their own followers gather around, as do Cleinias's admirers, with Ctesippus foremost.

275D-277C Euthydemus asks Cleinias whether it is the wise or ignorant who learn, and Dionysodorus whispers to Socrates that the boy will be refuted whichever way he answers. Euthydemus does refute Cleinias's answer, and Dionysodorus immediately jumps in to refute him again for taking the opposite side. Euthydemus then asks whether learners learn what they know or what they don't know, and the process of double refutation is repeated.

277D-282E To allow Cleinias to regain confidence, Socrates interrupts. He says the two brothers are not being serious, but playing with two meanings of the word "learn." Socrates shows what serious questioning would be like, and gets Cleinias to agree that no possession could make anyone happy who lacks wisdom. Socrates then invites the brothers to take over the questions and continue in the same spirit.

283A-285A Dionysodorus questions Socrates, arguing that anyone who wants Cleinias to cease to be who he is and become wise wants him struck dead. Ctesippus steps in to call Dionysodorus a liar. Euthydemus and Dionysodorus begin to double-team Ctesippus, trying to argue him into saying it is impossible to tell a lie, but Ctesippus resists fiercely.

285A-288D To allow Ctesippus to calm down, Socrates interrupts. He playfully suggests that they let the brothers teach them virtue and wisdom in their own way. Dionysodorus reduces Ctesippus to silence by arguing that there is no such thing as contradiction. Socrates asks whether Dionysodorus is saying what seems true to him, or arguing for the sake of argument, and then asks what he calls a stupid question. The exchanges become fierce again, and Ctesippus returns to the fray. Socrates has to calm him down again.

288D-290D Socrates resumes questioning Cleinias, asking what sort of knowledge it would be that would make people happy. Cleinias gives an eloquent argument that it cannot be the art of a military general.

290E-293A Crito interrupts Socrates' narrative to protest that he is making things up, and Socrates draws him into a discussion of the art of kingship, but Crito keeps asking what was said about it the previous day, and Socrates returns to his narration.

293B-297B Euthydemus argues that Socrates already has the knowledge he is seeking, and that he himself and his brother know everything. Socrates comments that the pair of them are finally being serious. Ctessipus breaks in and asks them to demonstrate that they know everything, asking for particular examples in an uninhibited way. Socrates steps back in, and finally allows the brothers to question him in their own way. Their attempt to demonstrate that *he* knows everything breaks down when he brings up things that are impossible to know because they cannot be true.

297B-304B Dionysodorus now begins quibbling with everything Socrates says. Euthydemus and Ctesippus re-enter the discussion, which becomes fierce once again, and then farcical. Euthydemus delivers a knock-out punch to Socrates, Dionysodorus follows it up, and Ctesippus sarcastically concedes defeat. Socrates advises the two brothers to do their teaching in private, and offers himself and Cleinias as students.

304B-end Socrates again invites Crito to come along to study with Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. Crito resists, and reports hearing from another person who was present that the brothers' display showed that philosophy is a waste of time. Socrates urges Crito to make a first-hand examination of everything that purports to be philosophy, and not to accept anyone else's opinions about it.

271a *Crito*: Who was it you were talking to yesterday in the Lyceum, Socrates? There was such a big mob standing around you folks that when I came up wanting to listen I couldn't hear anything clearly; when I leaned over, I got a glimpse, though, and it seemed to me it was some stranger you were talking to. Who was it?

Socrates: And which one are you asking about, Crito? There was not one, but a pair.

Crito: The one I'm speaking of was sitting on your right, two over;
B Axiochus's youngster was in between you. And he seemed to me to have grown very big, Socrates, and not to be much different in age from our own Critobulus. *He*'s skinny though, while this boy is well filled-out, beautiful and good[1] in his looks.

Socrates: Euthydemus is the person you're asking about, Crito, and the one sitting beside me on my left was his brother Dionysodorus. He takes part in the discussions too.

C *Crito*: I don't know either one, Socrates. They're some more new sophists, it seems. From where? And what's their wisdom?

1 The Athenian aristocracy commonly used the phrase *kalos kai agathos* for someone with the bearing and manners of a proper gentleman. Socrates, a bit further on, will contrast Axiochus's son (Cleinias) with his lover Ctesippus in this respect.

Socrates: They're from somewhere around here by descent, from Chios I think; they went out to Thurii as settlers, but they're in exile from there and they've been spending their time for many years now around these regions. But as for what you ask about, the wisdom of the pair,[2] it's a wondrous one, Crito. The *pair* of them is literally all-inclusively wise. I didn't know before this what all-round competitors were, because these two are all-round fighters in the precise sense—not the way the pair of Acarnanian brothers were all-round competitors, since they could do battle only with the body. **D** But this pair is, in the first place, most formidable in body and in battle, where it's formidable enough to dominate everyone—since it's thoroughly wise at fighting in arms itself, and also capable of **272A** making anyone else who pays a fee the same—and then too, it's utterly dominant both at fighting the battle in the lawcourts and at teaching anyone else both how to speak and how to get speeches suitable for lawcourts written. Before this, the pair was formidable at these things only, but now it has brought the art of all-round competition to full perfection. For the pair has now worked out the type of battle that was left unworked-at by it, so that no one at all is able even to stand up against them, so formidable has the pair become at battling in arguments and refuting everything **B** that's said, in the same way whether it's false or whether it's true. So I have it in mind, Crito, to turn myself over to this pair of men, since it claims that in a short time it can also make anyone else at all formidable at these same things.

Crito: What, Socrates! Aren't you afraid, at your age, that you're already too old?

Socrates: That least of all, Crito; I have plenty of evidence and encouragement not to be afraid of it. For this very pair got started at this wisdom that I have my heart set on, the art of debating, when, as one might say, they were a couple of senior citizens. The pair wasn't wise yet a year or two ago. But I *am* afraid of just one thing, that I'll **C** bring disgrace on the two strangers too, just as I did on Connus the harp teacher, the son of Metrobius, who is still even now going on teaching me to play the harp. The boys who go to his lessons with me and see this laugh at me and call Connus the geezer-teacher. So I'm afraid that somebody might revile these two strangers this same way, and in all probability, they could be afraid of this very thing and be unwilling to accept me. Now, Crito, I've persuaded other older folks to go there with me as fellow pupils, and I'm going **D** to try to persuade some different ones to go to these lessons. Why

2 Socrates almost always uses the dual number for the two brothers, instead of the plural. The translation uses the word "pair" and singular pronouns and verbs to capture the odd overemphatic effect of this usage. In this speech, for instance, the pair of brothers is several times referred to as "it," since a dual entity is neither a "they" nor a "he."

don't you come along too? And we'll bring your sons as bait; I know they'll give *us* an education too, because they'll want *them*.

Crito: Well, nothing prevents it, Socrates, if it seems like a good idea to you. But explain to me first what the wisdom of the pair of men is, so I'll know what we're going to learn.

Socrates: You couldn't hear it any sooner, since there's no way I could say that I wasn't paying attention to the pair; I gave my full attention and have a very good memory of it, and I'll try to go through
E it all for you from the beginning. By the grace of some god, I happened to be sitting there where you saw me, alone in the undressing area, and I just then had it in mind to get up and leave; but as I was getting up, my accustomed divine sign[3] came. So I sat back
273A down, and a little later this pair, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, came in, and many others along with them, pupils as it seemed to me, and when the pair had come in, they walked around in the covered walkway. And the two hadn't yet gone two or three times around the walkway when Cleinias came in, the one you say—and say truly—has grown so much, and behind him were very many of his lovers, especially Ctesippus, a certain young man from Paeania, very beautiful and good in his nature, except for being rude[4] on
B account of being young. From the entryway, Cleinias spotted me sitting alone, and came straight over and sat at my right, just as you say. And at first, when Dionysodorus and Euthydemus spotted him, the pair of them stood there in conversation with each other, casting one glance after another over at us—for I too had my full attention on the pair—and then the two came and sat down, one of them, Euthydemus, next to the youngster, and the other next to myself on my left, with the rest wherever each happened to settle.

C So I gave the pair a welcome, since I was seeing them after some time; then after that I said to Cleinias, "These two here, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, are certainly a pair of wise men, Cleinias, not in small matters but in great ones. The pair knows everything that has to do with war, all that anyone needs who's going to be a good general, formations and leadership and how to fight in heavy armor; and the pair also has the ability to make someone be powerful at coming to his own aid in the lawcourts, if anyone does him an injustice."

D Now saying those things got me a contemptuous look from the pair, the two looked at each other and laughed, and Euthydemus said, "We no longer take those things seriously, Socrates; we just treat them as side jobs."

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3 This is referred to in Plato's *Apology* (31D) and *Phaedrus* (242B-C) as "a sort of voice" that held him back from actions that would have been to his detriment.

4 Socrates uses the word *hubristês*. *Hubris* ranges in meaning from insolent disdain to violent cruelty. Its use here is clearly at the milder end of the range, but just as clearly clashes with the conventional phrase for gentlemanliness. Later in the dialogue, Ctesippus will display the kind of feisty rudeness another tradition might call *chutzpah*.

And I was in wonder, and said, "Then surely your work must be a thing of beauty, if such important matters turn out to be side jobs for you. Before the gods, tell me, the pair of you, what this beautiful thing is."

"Virtue, Socrates," he said. "We believe the pair of us are able to impart it to human beings in the most beautiful form and in the quickest way."

"Zeus!" I said, "How great a matter the two of you do speak of! **E**
Where did the pair of you find this godsend? I was still thinking of you the way I was just saying, as being a formidable pair mainly at this matter of fighting in armor, and I spoke about the pair of you that way, because I remember you two proclaiming that when you came to town before. But if the pair of you truly has got this knowledge now, be merciful—for I am literally addressing you as a pair of gods, beg- **274A**
ging you to have forgiveness toward me for the things I said before. But, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, see whether you're telling the truth; given the magnitude of your proclamation, being skeptical is nothing to be wondered at."

"Be sure of it, though, Socrates; this is the way it is."

"Then I call you blessed for this acquirement, far more than the Great King for his empire. But tell me this much, whether the pair of you has the intention to give a display of this wisdom, or what your wishes are."

"That's the very thing we're here for, Socrates, for the pair of us to give a display and to teach it, if anyone wants to learn." **B**

"Well, I promise you that everyone who doesn't have this will want to learn it, I first of all, and then this Cleinias here, and in addition to us Ctesippus here and these others," I said, pointing out to him the lovers of Cleinias, who now happened to be standing around us. For Ctesippus happened to be sitting at a distance from Cleinias, and it so happened, it seemed to me, that Euthydemus, in leaning over forward while speaking to me, blocked Ctesippus's view of Cleinias, **C**
who was between us. So wanting to look at his darling, and being at the same time a passionate listener, Ctesippus was the first to jump up and stand near us, just opposite, and when the others saw him, they too stood around us the same way, both the lovers of Cleinias and the companions of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. It was these I was pointing to when I told Euthydemus that they'd all be ready to learn. Then Ctesippus joined in saying so very eagerly, as did the **D**
rest, and everyone in common urged the pair to display the power of their wisdom.

So I said, "Well then, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, the pair of you must go all out in every way to gratify these people and to make a display for my sake as well. It's obvious that giving the fullest display would be no small job, but tell me this, the pair of you, do you have the power to make a man good only if he's already convinced that he

E needs to learn from you, or even to make someone good who's not yet convinced, because he believes the matter of virtue isn't learnable at all or that you two are no teachers of it? Come then, is it the job of the same art to persuade someone in that condition that virtue is teachable and that you are the people from whom one may learn it in the most beautiful way, or does that job belong to some other art?"

"Certainly it belongs to this same one, Socrates," said Dionysodorus.

"Therefore, Dionysodorus," I said, "of human beings of our time,
275A you folks would give the most beautiful exhortation to philosophy and a care for virtue?"

"That's exactly what we believe, Socrates."

"Then put off to another time your display of the rest of it for us," I said, "and the pair of you give us a display of this very thing. You two persuade this youngster here that he needs to engage in philosophy and care about virtue, and gratify both me and all these people here. For as it turns out, something of the sort is the case with this young fellow, and both I and all these people happen to be eager for him to become as excellent as possible. He's the son of Axiochus, who's
B a son of old Alcibiades, and he's a first cousin of the Alcibiades now living; his name is Cleinias. He's young, and we're worried about him, fearing that, as is likely with a young person, someone might get in ahead of us and turn his thoughts to some other pursuit and corrupt him. The pair of you have arrived here with beautiful timing, then, so if it makes no difference to you, take the young fellow to make trial of and have a discussion in front of us."

So when I had spoken, in just about those very words, Euthydemus, in a manner both manly and confident, said, "It makes no difference,
C Socrates, so long as the youngster is willing to answer questions."

"That's just what he's accustomed to," I said, "because these people here often come up to him and ask lots of things and discuss them, so he's pretty confident about answering questions."

How can I give you a beautiful account of what came next, Crito? It's no small task to have the power to recapture such inconceivably
D great wisdom in recounting it, so I, just like the poets, need to begin my narrative by invoking the Muses and Memory. Well, I believe Euthydemus began from somewhere more or less like this: "Cleinias, which sort of human beings are those who learn, the wise or the ignorant?"

And since the question was of great magnitude, the young fellow turned red in the face, and at a loss, cast a glance toward me. And noticing that he'd been thrown into confusion, I said, "Keep your
E confidence up, Cleinias, and answer whichever way it appears to you in a manly way, since there's a chance it will be of great benefit."

And at this point, Dionysodorus leaned over a little toward my ear, with a big smile on his face, and said, "I can tell you for sure in

advance, Socrates, that whichever way the young fellow answers, he'll be refuted."

And it happened that Cleinias gave his answer while Dionysodorus was in the midst of saying that, so that there was no chance for me even to advise the young man to be on his guard; he said that **276A** those who learn would be the wise.

And Euthydemus said, "And are there people whom you call teachers, or are there not?" He agreed there were. "And I presume the teachers of the learners are teachers in the same way those skilled at the harp and at reading and writing were teachers of you and the other children, and the learners are learners in the same way you were?" He concurred. "And obviously, at the time you were learning, you did not yet know the things you were learning?" He said they didn't. "Well then, were you wise when you didn't know those **B** things?" "Surely not," he said. "And if not wise, ignorant?" "Very much so." "Therefore, you who were learning what you did not know were learning it while being ignorant." The young fellow nodded his head. "Therefore, Cleinias, it's the ignorant who learn, and not, as you assume, the wise."

When he said that, then just like a chorus at a signal from the director, those followers who were with Dionysodorus and Euthydemus cheered and laughed all together. And before the young man could **C** well and truly catch his breath, Dionysodorus took right up and said, "And what about when your writing teacher gave you dictation, Cleinias? Which of the children learned what was dictated, the wise or the ignorant ones?" "The wise," said Cleinias. "Therefore it's the wise and not the ignorant who learn, and you didn't answer Euthydemus well just now."

And at this the lovers of the pair of men gave a very loud laugh **D** and cheer, in admiration of the pair's wisdom. The rest of us were dumbfounded. And Euthydemus, noticing that we were bowled over, in order to put us still more in wonder at him, did not let up on the young fellow, but kept up the questioning, and just the way good dancers do, he did a double pirouette on the same point, and said, "Do learners learn what they know or what they don't know?"

And Dionysodorus whispered quietly toward me again, saying, **E** "Here's another one, Socrates, just like the last one."

"Zeus!" I said. "Surely the last question made a beautiful showing for us."

"Everything we ask is like that, Socrates," he said: "there's no way out."

"Well then that's why you seem to me to be well thought of by your pupils," I said.

At that point, Cleinias answered Euthydemus that the learners would be learning what they didn't know, and the latter began asking him questions by the same means as before. "What!" he said; "don't **277A**

you know your letters?" "Yes," he said. "All of them?" He agreed. "And when anyone dictates anything whatever, isn't he dictating letters?" He agreed. "So he's dictating something included among things you know," he said, "if in fact you know them all?" He agreed with this too. "So then *you* don't learn whatever anyone dictates," he said, "but someone who doesn't know the letters does learn?" "No,"
B he said: "I do learn." "Well then you learn what you know," he said, "if you do in fact know all the letters." He agreed. "Therefore you did not answer correctly," he said.

And these things had barely yet been fully said by Euthydemus when Dionysodorus caught up the argument like a ball and aimed it back at the young man, saying, "Euthydemus is playing a trick on you, Cleinias. For tell me, isn't learning getting knowledge of the thing which one learns?" Cleinias agreed. "And is knowing anything other than having knowledge already?" he said. He concurred. "Therefore
C *not* knowing is not yet having knowledge?" He agreed with him. "Well, are those get anything the ones who already have it or the ones who don't have it?" "The ones who don't." "And you've agreed that those who don't know are among those who don't have something?" He gave a nod. "Aren't the learners among those who get something, not among those who have it?" He concurred. "Therefore," he said, "it's those who *don't* know who learn, Cleinias, and not those who do know."

D Now Euthydemus was hurrying in to throw the youngster again for the third fall; I realized that the young fellow was going under, and wanted to give him a breather so he wouldn't wimp out on us, and to build up his courage I said: "Cleinias, you shouldn't wonder if the arguments appear to you out of the ordinary. Maybe you don't see what the pair of strangers is doing to you. They're doing the same thing people do in the Corybantic rites when they perform the enthronement of the person they're about to initiate. For there too, there is some dancing and playfulness—maybe you've also been
E initiated. Now too this pair is doing nothing but dancing around you and performing a sort of playful frolic, for the purpose of initiating you afterward. So consider yourself now to be listening to first stages of the sophistical mysteries. Because first off, as Prodicus says, it's necessary to learn correctness where words are concerned. And this is exactly what the pair of strangers is pointing out to you, that you didn't know that human beings apply the word *learn* on the one hand to the case when someone who at first had no knowledge about
278A some matter later gets the knowledge of it, and on the other hand they apply this same word also when he already has knowledge and with this knowledge examines this same matter when it's involved in action or speech. They are more apt to call this *understanding* rather than learning, but there are also times when they call it learning, and this, as these folks were pointing out, escaped your notice, that the

same word applies to human beings standing in opposite situations, to both one who knows and one who doesn't. Something pretty close to that was also involved in the second question, in which they asked **B** you whether human beings learn what they know or what they don't. Among learnable matters, these are playthings, and that's why I'm saying that these folks are playing with you; the reason I say it's playfulness is that even if one were to learn many things of this sort, or even all of them, one would not know a bit more about how things are with the matters concerned, but only be able to play with human beings by the use of differences among words, tripping them up and toppling them over, like people who enjoy pulling chairs out from under those who are starting to sit down, and laugh when they see **C** someone toppled over on his back. So consider what has happened to you at their hands as play, but in what comes after it, it's clear that these two themselves will point you to what is serious; I'll point the way for the pair to make sure they deliver what they promised me. For the pair claimed they'd display their wisdom at exhortation, but now, it seems to me, the pair of them thought they had to play with you first. So, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, let this playing of yours **D** be done with; it's probably sufficient. Next give a display, the pair of you, of exhorting the young man about how he ought to care for wisdom and virtue. And first I'll show you two how I conceive of that and how I desire to hear it done. And if I seem to you to be doing it in an amateurish and ludicrous way, don't laugh at me, for from my eagerness to hear *your* wisdom I'm going to dare to make it up as I go along, right in front of you. So bear with me without laughing as **E** you listen, you and your pupils both; and you, son of Axiochus, give me your answers.

"Do all human beings want to do well? Or is this question one of the ludicrous things I was afraid of just now? No doubt it's senseless even to ask such things, for who among human beings doesn't want to do well?" "There's no one at all who doesn't," Cleinias said. "So be **279A** it," I said; "so next, since we want to do well, what would be the way for us to do well? Wouldn't it be if we had a lot of good things? Or is that an even sillier question than the other? For no doubt it's obvious that this too is the case." He concurred. "Well in that case, keep going; of the things there are, what sorts happen to be good for us? Or does it seem likely that there's no great difficulty at all on this point either, and that a man of high status would answer easily? Every one of them would tell us that being rich is good, isn't that so?" "Certainly," he said. "And also being healthy, being beautiful, and being sufficiently **B** provided with everything else that pertains to the body?" It seemed so to him too. "But also good birth, and powers and honors among one's own—it's surely clear that these are good things too." He agreed. "So what else is left for us among the goods?" I said. "What about being temperate and just and courageous? Before Zeus, Cleinias, do you hold

that we'd be putting it rightly if we put them down as goods, or if we don't? Maybe someone would dispute it with us, but how does it seem
C to you?" "They're goods," said Cleinias. "So be it," I said; "and where in the chorus should we assign a place for wisdom? Among the goods, or how would you say?" "Among the goods." "Now think hard, so we don't leave out any of the goods that are also worth mentioning." "No, we don't seem to me to be leaving anything out," said Cleinias. And I recollected something and said, "Yes we are, by Zeus! We're in danger of leaving out the greatest of the goods." "What's that?" he said. "Good fortune, Cleinias, which all people, even the lowest of the low, claim is the greatest of goods." "What you say is true," he
D said. And I had another afterthought, and said, "You and I were just about to make ourselves the laughingstocks of the strangers, son of Axiochus." "Why's that, exactly?" he said. "Because even though we put good fortune in the previous list just now, we were talking about the same thing all over again." "And why exactly is that?" "Surely it's a laughing matter to put forward a thing that's been lying in front of us all along and talk about the same things twice." "How do you mean that?" he said. "Well surely wisdom is good fortune," I said; "even a child would recognize that." And he was in wonder—he's still so young and open-natured. And since I recognized that he was in a state
E of wonder, I said, "Cleinias, don't you know that where doing well at flute music is concerned, the flute players are the most fortunate?" He concurred. "And where reading and writing are concerned, it's those who are skilled at letters?" "Certainly." "And what about this? Do you suppose any people are more fortunate in dangers at sea, generally speaking, than wise helmsmen?" "Surely not." "And what if you were on a military campaign? Who would you rather share the
280A danger and the fortune with, a wise general or an ignorant one?" "A wise one." "And what if you were sick? Who would you like to take your chances with, a wise doctor or an ignorant one?" "A wise one." "And isn't that because you assume you'd come out more fortunately by being involved with someone wise rather than with someone ignorant?" He went along with that. "Therefore wisdom makes human beings fortunate in every sphere. For surely wisdom could never go wrong in any way, but necessarily acts rightly and turns out rightly; otherwise it would no longer be wisdom."

B I'm not quite sure how, but we ended up agreeing that the upshot of it went like this: when wisdom is present, anyone it's present with has no further need of good fortune. And when we'd come to agreement on that, I began to question him again about what bearing it had on our previous agreements. "For we agreed," I said, "that if a lot of good things were present to us, we'd be happy and do well." He concurred. "And would we be happy because of the goods that were present if they were of no benefit to us, or if they were of
C benefit?" "If they were of benefit," he said. "And would they be of

any benefit if we only had them but didn't use them? For instance, if we had a lot of food but didn't eat it, or drink and didn't drink it, is there any way we'd benefit from that?" "Surely not," he said. "And what about all the skilled workmen? If they each had all the necessities for their own work provided for them, but made no use of them, would they do well by possessing them, because they were in possession of everything that a skilled worker needed to have? If a carpenter, for instance, were provided with all his tools and plenty of wood, but didn't do any carpentry, is it possible that he could get any benefit out of possessing them?" "There's no way," he said. "And **D** what if someone had got possession of riches and of all the goods we were just now speaking of, but made no use of them? Would he be happy because of the possession of these good things?" "Surely not, Socrates." "Therefore it's necessary," I said, "for someone who's going to be happy not only to possess such goods but also to make use of them, or else no benefit comes from possessing them." "What you say is true." "Well then, Cleinias, is this now sufficient to make **E** someone happy, to possess good things and use them?" "It seems so to me." "Whether someone uses them rightly or not?" I said. "If he uses them rightly." "Beautifully said," I said, "for I imagine there's more trouble when someone makes a wrong use of any article than when he leaves it alone, for in the one case something bad happens, while in the other it's neither bad nor good. Wouldn't we say so?" He **281A** went along with that. "What about it, then? In the working-on and using of wood, is the thing that results in using it rightly anything other than a knowledge of carpentry?" "Surely not," he said. "And presumably also in the workmanship involved with furniture, it's knowledge that results in rightness." He concurred. "Well, then," I said, "also in the use of the good things we were talking about at first, riches and health and beauty, was it knowledge that led the way to rightness in using all such things and kept action on the right **B** track, or something else?" "Knowledge," he said. "Therefore knowledge provides human beings not only with good fortune but also, it seems, with doing well, in regard to every possession and action." He agreed. "Before Zeus, then," I said, "is there any benefit from the rest of our possessions without judgment and wisdom? Would a human being profit from having a lot of possessions and engaging in a lot of action if he didn't have any sense, or more so from few and having sense? Look at it like this: if he *did* fewer things, wouldn't he do fewer **C** things wrong, and do less badly by going wrong less often, and be less miserable as a result of doing less badly?" "Entirely so," he said. "And would it be more the case that someone would do fewer things if he were poor or rich?" "Poor," he said. "And if he were sickly or robust?" "Sickly." "Honored or without honor?" "Without honor." "And would he do fewer things if he were brave and sensible or a coward?" "A coward." "And wouldn't it be more the case if he were

lazy rather than energetic?" He went along with that. "And sluggish
D rather than quick, and dim-sighted and hard of hearing rather than sharp?" We came to terms with each other on all such cases. "In sum, then, Cleinias," I said, "it may well be that with the totality of things that we were claiming at first were good, the discussion about them is not concerned with how they themselves, by themselves, are good by nature, but, as it seems, goes like this: if ignorance guides them, they're greater evils than their opposites, to the extent that they have more power to serve a guide that's bad, but if judgment and wisdom
E guide them, they're greater goods, but themselves by themselves, neither they nor their opposites are worth anything." "So it appears, it seems," he said, "as you say." "So what results for us from the things that have been said? Is it anything other than this, that none of the other things is either good or bad, but of the two things making up this pair, wisdom is good and ignorance is bad?" He agreed.

282A "Then let's consider what still remains," I said. "Since we're all eager to be happy, and it came to light that we become so both by using things and using them rightly, and that it's knowledge that provides the rightness and good fortune, then it's necessary, it seems, for all men to equip themselves by every means for this: how they'll be as wise as possible. Isn't that so?" "Yes," he said. "And presumably if one believes that he ought much rather to get this than money as an
B inheritance from his father, and get it as well from his guardians and friends, and especially from those who claim to be his lovers, whether strangers or fellow citizens, begging and pleading with them to give him a portion of wisdom, there's no shame in that, Cleinias, nor any grounds for reproach in serving or slaving for either a lover or any human being for that purpose, and being willing to perform any sort of beautiful services whatever in his eagerness to become wise. Doesn't it seem that way to you?" I said. "You seem to me to be saying it quite
C well," he said. "*If* wisdom is teachable, at any rate, Cleinias," I said, "and doesn't just pop up in human beings on its own. For this is still unexamined by us, and not yet agreed on between you and me." "But it does seem to me to be teachable, Socrates," he said. And I was pleased, and said, "You speak beautifully, most excellent of men, and you did well to free me from a long investigation on this very point of whether wisdom is teachable or not teachable. So now, since it seems to you both teachable and the only thing there is to make a human
D being happy and fortunate, is there anything else you can do other than assert that it's necessary to engage in philosophy, and have your own mind set on doing that yourself?" "That's entirely so, Socrates," he said, "as much as anything can possibly be."

And I was delighted at hearing that, and said, "That sort of thing, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, is my example of the kinds of speeches of exhortation I'm longing for, amateurish perhaps, and said haltingly at great length. But let whichever of the pair of you prefers

give us a display of how to do this same thing by art. Or if the two of you don't want to do that, give the young fellow a display of what **E** follows from where I left off, whether he needs to acquire every sort of knowledge, or there's some one kind he needs to get to be happy and be a good man, and what that is. For as I was saying at the beginning, it happens to be of great importance to us for this youngster to become wise and good."

So I said those things, Crito, and I paid very close attention to what **283A** was going to come after that, and pondered in what sort of way they would approach the discussion and on what basis they would begin encouraging the youngster to devote himself to wisdom and virtue. So then the older of them, Dionysodorus, began the discussion first, and we were all looking to him in expectation of hearing at once some very wondrous arguments. And that was exactly what we got, for **B** the argument he launched into, Crito, was a thing to be wondered at and well worth your hearing, as it was a speech to encourage one toward virtue.

"Tell me, Socrates and the rest of you," he said, "all of you who claim you have a desire for this youngster to become wise, are you being playful in saying this, or are you serious and truly desire it?"

And I had the thought that the pair of them had imagined that we were being playful before, when we were urging the pair to have a conversation with the youngster, and that was why those two took it playfully and weren't serious. So having that thought, I said still more **C** emphatically that we were serious to a wondrous degree.

And Dionysodorus said, "Watch out, Socrates, that you won't end up in the position of disowning what you're saying now." "I've given it thought," I said, "and there's no way in the world I would ever come to disown it." "What about it, then?" he said. "You folks claim you want him to become wise?" "Very much so." "And is Cleinias wise now or not?" he said. "*He* says he's not," I said, "not yet at least; he's no imposter." "But *you* folks want him to *become* wise," he said, "and **D** not be ignorant?" We agreed. "So you want him to become what he's not, and no longer be what he is now." And when I heard that I was confused, and he, seizing upon my confusion, said, "And since you want him no longer to be what he now is, is that any different from wanting him to be dead? That's how it seems. A lot friends and lovers like you would be worth, who'd entertain any thought of having their darling struck dead!"

And when Ctesippus heard that, he took umbrage on behalf of **E** his darling and spoke up, saying, "Thurian stranger, if it were not too crude a thing to say, I'd tell you 'Go chop off *your* head' for thinking any such thing as the lie you're telling about me and the others, which I think is even an unholy thing to say, that I'd want this boy here struck dead!"

And Euthydemus said, "What, Ctesippus? You think it's possible to tell a lie?" "By Zeus, I do!" he said. "I'd be crazy not to." "Does the
284A one who tells it say the thing that the statement is about, or not say it?" "He says it," he said. "And if he says it, he's saying nothing else among the things there are than the very thing he's saying?" "How could he do otherwise?" said Ctesippus. "And that thing he's saying is one of the things there are, distinct from the others?" "Certainly." "And the one who says that thing says something that is?" he said. "Yes." "But surely someone who says what *is*, and things that *are*, speaks the truth. So if Dionysodorus is saying things that are, he's speaking the truth and not lying about you."

B "Yes," Ctesippus said, "but someone who says *those* things is *not* saying things that are, Euthydemus."

And Euthydemus said, "But mustn't it be the case that things that are not *are not*?" "They are not." "So mustn't it be the case that things that are not are not things that *are* anywhere?" "Not anywhere." "So is there any way for anyone, whoever he is, to do anything with them, with things that are not, so as to make them *be* when they are not anywhere?" "It doesn't seem so to me," Ctesippus said. "Then what about rhetoricians? When they speak among the populace do
C they do nothing?" "They do something," he said. "And if they do something, they also make something?" "Yes." "Therefore speaking is both doing and making?" He gave his agreement. "Therefore no one says things that are not—since that would already be making them something, while you've agreed that it's not possible for anyone to make anything out of something that is not—so by your statement no one says what is false, but if Dionysodorus speaks, he speaks the truth and says things that are."

"By Zeus, Euthydemus," said Ctesippus, "he does in a certain manner say things that are, but not *as* they are."

"How do you mean that, Ctesippus," said Dionysodorus. "Are
D there some people who state things the way they are?" "There are indeed," he said: "good and beautiful people[5] who tell the truth." "Well," he said, "aren't good things in a good state and bad things in a bad one?" He went along with that. "And you agree that good and beautiful people state things the way they are?" "I agree." "Therefore, Ctesippus," he said, "good people speak ill of bad things, if they speak of them as they are." "Yes, by Zeus!," he said, "emphatically so, about bad human beings at any rate, and if you listen to me, you'll guard
E against being one of them, so good people won't speak ill of you. You can be sure that good people speak ill of bad people." "And do they talk big about big people," Euthydemus said, "and hotly about hot people?" "They most surely do," said Ctesippus; "anyway, they speak coldly about cold stiffs, and say their arguments leave them

5 This is the phrase used for proper gentlemen, used above by Crito for Cleinias's looks and by Socrates for Ctesippus's nature.

cold." "Name-calling, Ctesippus," said Dionysodorus; "you're just name-calling." "I am not, by Zeus, Dionysodorus," he said, "since I'm your friend, but I *am* giving you a piece of comradely advice, and trying to persuade you never to speak so crudely in front of me as to say I want the people I care about most to be struck dead." **285A**

Now since they seemed to me to be getting too fierce with one another, I started speaking playfully to Ctesippus, and said, "Now, now, Ctesippus, it seems to me we ought to accept what they say from the strangers, if they want to offer it, and not get into a quarrel over a word. If they know how to make human beings be struck dead in such a way that they turn them from worthless and senseless people into sensible ones of good character, then whether the pair of them has discovered this themselves or learned it from someone else, if **B** this pair knows how to accomplish *this* sort of death and destruction that kills someone worthless in order to bring him forth again of good character—and it's clear that they do know how; they did claim, at any rate, that the newly discovered art the pair of them has is to make good human beings out of worthless ones—then let's go along with them on it, and when they've killed the young fellow for us and made him sensible, let them kill all the rest of us too. And if you young ones **C** are afraid, let the risk be on me, as if on a Carian,[6] seeing as how I, since I'm old, am ready to take the risk and hand myself over to this Dionysodorus as if he were Medea of Colchis. Let this pair kill me, or boil me if they want to, or whatever they want, let them do it; just let them bring me forth with good character."

And Ctesippus said, "I'm ready myself, too, Socrates, to hand myself over to the strangers, even if they want to skin me still worse than they're skinning me now, if my hide is going to end up not **D** turned into a wineskin the way Marsyas's[7] was, but into virtue. This Dionysodorus here thinks I'm mad at him, but I'm not mad, I'm just speaking up against things said against me that seem to me not exactly said beautifully. But you, noble Dionysodorus, stop referring to contradicting as name-calling; name-calling is something different."

And Dionysodorus said, "You make these statements, Ctesippus, on the assumption that there is such a thing as contradicting?"

"Totally and emphatically so," he said. "Do you believe there is **E** no contradicting, Dionysodorus?"

"At least you can't demonstrate that you've ever heard anybody contradicting anybody else," he said.

6 The Carians were the first mercenary soldiers, and Carian slaves were cheap, in plentiful supply, and regarded as expendable. The reference to Medea just below is to a trick she played on the daughters of Pelias, getting them to cut their father up and boil him as a way of restoring him to youth.

7 A satyr skinned by Apollo after challenging him to a musical competition, his piping against Apollo's harping, and losing.

"Is that a fact?" he said; "well right now I'm demonstrating to you that I'm hearing Ctesippus contradicting Dionysodorus."

"And can you back up your statement of that?"

"Thoroughly," he said.

"Well, then," he said, "are there descriptions for each of the things there are?" "Certainly." "Of the way each of them is, or of the way
286A it is not?" "The way it is." "Right, for if you recall, Ctesippus," he said, "we just now displayed that no one states things as they are not, since it came to light that no one says what is not." "Well, what of it?" said Ctesippus; "are you and I contradicting each other any the less?" "Well," he said, "could we contradict each other if we were both stating a description of the same thing? Or in that case would we presumably be saying the same things?" He went along with that.
B "But when neither of us was stating the description of the thing," he said, "could we be contradicting each other then? Or in that case would neither one of us be making any mention of the thing at all?" He agreed with him on that point too. "But then when I state the description of the thing, and you state a different one of something else, are we contradicting each other then? Or am I stating the thing while you aren't even speaking of it at all? How could anyone who's not speaking of it contradict someone who is?"

Ctesippus was silent. But I was in wonder at the argument, and said, "How do you mean that, Dionysodorus? For I tell you, not-
C withstanding the fact that I've heard this argument many times from many people, I'm always in wonder at it—for those who were around Protagoras used it fervently, and so did some who were around even before that. But to me there always seems to be something wonderful about the way it overturns itself as well other arguments—and I believe that from you I'll learn the truth of it most beautifully. And is that anything other than that it's impossible to say what's false? That's the force of the argument, isn't it? There's just speaking the truth, if one speaks, or else not speaking?"

He went along with that.

D "So then what's false is impossible to say, but *is* possible to have as an opinion?"

"Not even to have as an opinion," he said.

"Therefore there is no false opinion at all," I said.

He said there's not.

"And therefore no ignorance either, and no ignorant human beings. Or would that not be ignorance, if anything was—being wrong about things?"

"Certainly," he said.

"But that's not possible," I said.

He said it's not.

"Are you just making the argument for the sake of argument, Dionysodorus, so you can say something out of the ordinary, or does

it seem to you that it's true that there is no one among human beings who's ignorant?"

"Well," he said, "it's up to you to refute me." **E**

"Is that even possible by your argument, refuting anything, when no one is wrong?"

"No, it's not," said Euthydemus.

"But didn't Dionysodorus just now call on me to refute him?" I said.

"How could anyone call for the thing that is not? Are you calling for it?"

"It's just that I don't understand these wise matters very well, even when they're sound; I'm being a little dense about grasping this. So maybe I'm going to be asking a pretty stupid question, but you'll forgive me. See, if it's not possible to be wrong or have a false opinion **287A** or be ignorant, does that mean anything else than that it's not possible to *go* wrong whenever anyone performs an action either? Because it's not possible for the one who acts to go wrong with respect to the thing he's doing. Aren't you folks saying that?"

"Sure," he said.

"Well that's my stupid question right there," I said. "If we can't go wrong when we act or speak or think, then before Zeus, if that's the way these things are, what is it that you folks have come here to be teachers *of*? Weren't you just claiming you could impart virtue most **B** beautifully to any human being who's willing to learn?"

And Dionysodorus broke in, saying, "Oh, Socrates, are you so out of it[8] that you're raking up what we said at first, and if there's something I said last year are you going to dredge that up now, while you have no clue how to cope with the things that are being said at the present moment?"

"Well, they *are* very difficult," I said, "and that's to be expected, since they're being said by wise men, especially since this last thing you're saying is superdifficult to cope with. For what in the world do you mean by saying I have no clue how to cope with it, Dionysodorus? Or is it clear that you mean I have no clue how to refute it? Just tell **C** me, what other sense does this phrase have for you, that I have no clue how I can cope with the arguments?"

"But it's not very hard to cope with this stuff *you*'re saying,"[9] he said; "so answer me."

"Before *you* answer me, Dionysodorus?" I said.

"You're not going to answer?" he said.

"Would that be just?"

"Most assuredly just," he said.

8 Literally "such a Cronos," the god who once ruled the universe but was overthrown by Zeus and the rest of the new gods.

9 The sentence is construed with the "not" inserted by an earlier editor, and keeping the five words cut out by Burnet.

"According to what principle?" I said. "Or is it clear that it's on this one: that you come to us now as someone who's all-wise where
D arguments are concerned, and you know when someone has to answer and when not? And now you won't answer anything at all because you determine that you don't have to?"

"You're jabbering to get out of answering," he said. "Just obey me, good fellow, and answer, since you *do* admit that I'm wise."

"Well, then, the thing to do is obey," I said, "and that's necessary, it seems, since you're the boss. Just ask the questions."

"When anything has sense, is it things with souls that have it, or also things without souls?"

"Things with souls."

"And do you know of any phrase that has a soul?" he said.

"By Zeus, I certainly don't."

E "Then why did you ask just now what sense my phrase had for me?"

"Why else than because I made a mistake out of carelessness?" I said. "Or did I not make a mistake, but even said that correctly, when I said that phrases have sense? Do you claim I made a mistake or not? For if I didn't make a mistake, you have no refutation, no matter how wise you are, and *you* have no clue how to handle the argument.
288A And if I *did* make a mistake, you're not speaking correctly in that case either, since you declare that there's no such thing as making a mistake. And these things I'm saying are not directed at what you said last year. But, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus both,"[10] I said, "this argument, as it seems, is stuck in the same place, and still falls down in the act of knocking down anything else, the way it always has, and no way to keep this from happening has yet been discovered, not even by the art you fellows possess, so wondrous as it is in precision of arguments."

B And Ctesippus said. "Wonders you do speak, men of Thurii or Chios, whithersoever and howsoever the pair of you exults in being named, since you don't care what drivel you peddle."

And I was afraid that some name-calling was coming, so I calmed Ctesippus back down, saying, "Ctesippus, I tell you the same things I told Cleinias a little while ago, that you don't realize how wonderful the strangers' wisdom is. It's just that the pair of them is unwilling to be serious about displaying it to us; the pair just uses witchcraft

10 One reason why Socrates speaks of these men in the dual so often may be found this speech. When each of a pair of contradictory assumptions has consequences, the tag-team style of the men allows the two of them together to have it both ways. But the argument itself does not move anywhere, since no one takes responsibility for making a choice; the topic just spins in one place, as in the dance metaphor in 276D.

on us in imitation of Proteus,[11] the Egyptian sophist. So let's imitate Menelaus, and not let go of the two men until the pair of them reveal what it is that they're serious about. For I assume something thoroughly beautiful will be revealed by the pair whenever they start to get serious. Let's just beg and plead and pray to the pair to make the revelation. And I'm resolved to point out myself in what form I pray them to reveal themselves to me; I'll try to go over what follows from the things at the point where I left off before, as well as is in my power, to see if I can in any way appeal to them to show mercy on me and take pity on my wholehearted effort to be serious, and be serious themselves. C D

"Cleinias," I said, "you remind me where it was we left off. I believe it was somewhere around here: we were in agreement when we ended that one needs to engage in philosophy. Is that right?" "Yes," he said. "And philosophy is a process of acquiring knowledge," I said, "isn't that the way it is?" "Yes," he said. "And what sort of knowledge would we have acquired if we've acquired it rightly? Isn't that simply whatever sort will profit us?" "Certainly," he said. "And would it be of any profit to us if we knew how to go around and recognize where on earth the most gold was buried?" "It might," he said. "But we refuted that earlier," I said, "and concluded that we'd be no better off even if all the gold on earth came to us without effort or digging, so even if we knew how to turn rocks into gold, the knowledge wouldn't be worth anything. For if we're not also going to know how to use the gold, it was obvious that there's no benefit from it. Don't you remember?" I said. "I remember very well," he said. "And it seems that no benefit comes from any other kind of knowledge either, not money-making or doctoring or any other kind whatever that knows how to produce anything but not how to use what it produces. Isn't that the way it is?" He concurred. "And even if there's a knowledge that makes human beings immortal, without knowing how to make use of immortality, there seems to be no benefit from that either, if one must draw any conclusion on the basis of the things we agreed to before." All these things seemed so to us. "Therefore, beautiful boy," I said, "the sort of knowledge we need is one in which knowing how to produce something and how to use that which it produces coincide at one and the same time." "So it appears," he said. "Therefore it seems we're far from needing to be lyre-makers or possessors of any knowledge of that sort. For there the art of making is one thing and the art of using is another, separated from it though involving the same thing, because lyre-making and harp-playing are a pair of things much different from one another. Isn't that so?" He concurred. "And it's clear that flute-making is not what we need either, for this E 289A B C

11 A shape-shifting sea god described in the *Odyssey* (IV, 384-424) who eventually gave truthful answers to Menelaus's questions, but only after he'd held him still until he stopped his shifting.

is another one like that." It seemed so to him too. "Well, before the gods," I said, "if we were to learn the art of speechwriting, would that be the one we needed to possess in order to be happy?" "*I* don't think so," Cleinias replied.

D "What evidence are you making use of?" I said.

"I see *some* speechwriters who don't know how to use their own arguments, even though they compose them themselves," he said, "just like the lyre-makers with their lyres; but there are others here too who have the power to use the work done by those people, but are powerless to do their own speechwriting. So it's clear that with speeches too, the art of making and that of using are separate."

"You seem to me to offer sufficient evidence," I said, "that this art of speechwriting is not the one that someone could be happy by possessing. And yet I had supposed that the very knowledge which **E** we've been seeking all along would reveal itself somewhere in that vicinity. For the men themselves who are speechwriters, whenever I'm around them, seem to me to be superlatively wise, Cleinias, and the art itself that they possess is something divinely inspired and sublime. And surely that's nothing to be wondered at, since it's a branch **290A** of the art of enchantments, and little short of that in prestige. For the art of enchantments is a charming of snakes, spiders, scorpions, and other vermin and pests, while this one happens to be a charming and soothing of juries, assemblies, and other crowds. Or does it seem any different to you?" I said.

"No," he said; "the way you state it is just the way it appears to me."

"So where should we turn next?" I said. "To what sort of art?"

"I have no idea," he said.

"But I think I've found it," I said.

"What?" said Cleinias.

B "It seems to me that skill as a general, more than anything else, would be an art one would be happy by possessing," I said.

"It doesn't seem that way to me."

"How so?" I said.

"This is a particular art of hunting, directed at human beings."

"Well, what about it?" I said.

"No art of hunting in itself covers anything beyond pursuing and subduing. And when the huntsmen or fishermen have subdued whatever they pursued, they have no power to use it, but they turn **C** it over to the cooks, and that's also what people skilled at geometry, astronomy, and arithmetic do, since these are hunters too. For each sort of them doesn't just produce diagrams but makes discoveries of things that are; but since they themselves have no knowledge of how to make use of them, but only of how to hunt for them, then presumably, in order for full use to be made of the things discovered by them, they

must turn them over to people skilled at dialectic,[12] to those among them, at any rate, who are not utterly and totally devoid of sense."

"Well, well, most beautiful and most wise Cleinias," I said, "is that so?"

"Quite so," he said. "And so it's the same way with generals too. **D** When they've hunted down either a city or an army, they hand it over to the political men, because they themselves don't know how to use those they've hunted for, just as I'd imagine quail-hunters turn over quail to quail-keepers. So if we're in need of that art," he said, "which itself knows how to use what it acquires by either making it or hunting it down, and it's that sort of art that will make us blessedly happy, some other one needs to be sought," he said, "in place of the general's skill."

Crito: What are you saying, Socrates? That youngster uttered things **E** like that?

Socrates: You don't think so, Crito?

Crito: By Zeus, I should say not! Because *I* should think, if he did say them, he'd have no need for an education from Euthydemus or from any other human being either.

Socrates: Well, then, before Zeus, might it not have been Ctesippus who said them, and I'm not remembering?

Crito: Ctesippus my foot! **291A**

Socrates: Well, I know this for sure, that it wasn't Euthydemus or Dionysodorus who said them. But, my spooky Crito, might it not have been one of the higher powers present there that uttered them? Because I heard them, anyway; I know that very well.

Crito: Yes, by Zeus, Socrates; it sure does seem to me it was one of the higher powers, much higher! But after that did you folks keep on searching for yet another art? And did you find or not find that for the sake of which you were doing the searching?

Socrates: Where would we find it, you blessed fellow? We were com- **B** plete jokes. Just like children on a wild goose chase,[13] we were always imagining we were about to catch each piece of knowledge, while they were always slipping through our fingers. So why should I tell you the long version? But when we got to the art of kingship and were examining whether it could be the one that provides happiness and brings it to completion, it was just as if we

12 The art of dialectic is described by Socrates in the divided-line passage at the end of Bk. VI of Plato's *Republic* as philosophic reasoning that can suspend and look behind its own assumptions, unlike mathematical reasoning that is always bound by hypotheses. The word *dialektikê* might also have been used by others for the sort of logic-chopping games played by debaters, which would account for the following qualification. This digression on mathematics, and the whole rejection of the art of a general as the knowledge sufficient to bring happiness, seem to come from nowhere, and certainly not from anyone as inexperienced as Cleinias, as Crito will soon object.

13 Literally "chasing crested larks."

had stumbled at that point into a labyrinth; when we imagined that we were already at an end, we found ourselves turned back around
C as if we were at the beginning of the inquiry, and coming up short every bit as much as when we first started inquiring.

Crito: How did that happen to you, Socrates?

Socrates: I'll tell you. Because it seemed to us that the art of kingship was the same as the political art.

Crito: Well, what of it?

Socrates: And it seemed that it's to this art that generalship and all the rest turn over the task of ruling over the products of which they are the workmen, as being the only art that knows how to make use of them. So it seemed to us that this clearly was what we were looking for, and was the cause for things' being done rightly in the
D city, and that it is literally, as Aeschylus's verse[14] has it, sitting alone at the helm of the city, steering everything and ruling everything to make everything useful.

Crito: And beautifully so it seemed to you, didn't it, Socrates?

Socrates: You'll be the judge, Crito, if you want to listen to what happened to us after that. For we examined it again from another angle in the following manner: Come then, in ruling over every-
E thing, does the art of kingship produce any product for us or not? Absolutely, no doubt about it, we told each other. Wouldn't you say that too, Crito?

Crito: *I* would.

Socrates: So what would you say its product *is*? It's just as if I had asked you what product doctoring provides, in ruling over all the things *it* rules. Wouldn't you say it's health?

Crito: *I* would.

Socrates: And what about your own art of farming? In ruling over
292A all the things it rules, what does it produce? Wouldn't you say it provides us with food from the earth?

Crito: *I* would.

Socrates: And what about kingship and its ruling of all the things it rules? What does it produce? Maybe you're not quite ready to say.

Crito: By Zeus I'm not, Socrates!

Socrates: We weren't either, Crito. But you do know this much at least, that if this is what we're looking for, it must be beneficial.

Crito: Very much so.

Socrates: And so it must furnish us with something good?

Crito: Necessarily, Socrates.

B *Socrates*: But we agreed with each other, I believe, Cleinias and I, that there *is* nothing good other than knowledge of one sort or another.

14 At the beginning of *Seven Against Thebes*.

Crito: Yes, that's what you said.

Socrates: And as for all the other products that one might claim come from the political art—and a lot of these there would be, no doubt, if for instance it's to make the citizens rich and free and undisturbed by faction—all of them are manifestly neither bad nor good, while this art had to make people wise and impart knowledge, if it was going to be the one that benefits people and makes them happy. **C**

Crito: That's true; at any rate that's what was agreed to by you at the time, as you reported what was said.

Socrates: So does kingship make human beings wise and good?

Crito: What prevents it, Socrates?

Socrates: Well, does it make everybody good in every way? And does it provide every sort of knowledge, leatherworking and carpentry and all the others?

Crito: *I* don't imagine so, Socrates.

Socrates: Then exactly what sort of knowledge does it provide? And **D** what are we going to use it *for*? Because it needs to be something whose workmanship doesn't produce any of the products that are neither bad nor good, and that furnishes no other sort of knowledge than itself alone. So can we say what in the world this is, and what we're going to use it for? Do you want us to say, Crito, it's that by means of which we'll make other people good?

Crito: That's it exactly.

Socrates: And in what respect are they to be good and useful for what, according to us? Or do we say again that they'll make *others* good, and those others still others? But *what* good they are is not revealed **E** to us anywhere, seeing as how we've disqualified the products usually said to come from the political art, and we literally get the situation that's called "Corinthus, son of Zeus."[15] Exactly as I said, we've come up equally short, or even farther away from knowing what in the world that sort of knowledge is which will make us happy.

Crito: By Zeus, Socrates, it looks like you folks got yourselves into dire straits.

Socrates: And I myself, for my part, Crito, when I had landed in these **293A** straits, at once let loose with all my voice, appealing to the pair of strangers as though I were summoning the Dioscuri[16] to save us, the young fellow and me, from going under for the third time beneath the argument, and to make a serious effort by every means, and

15 When Megara, a colony of Corinth, declared independence from the mother city, and the Corinthian ambassadors ran out of arguments to dissuade them, they were left with nothing to say other than to appeal to the memory of the legendary founder of Corinth. The founder's name became a proverb for empty words repeated when all else has failed.

16 Castor and Pollux, twin sons of Zeus, who were customarily prayed to for help at sea.

once they'd gotten serious about it to display what in the world the knowledge is that we need to attain if we're to get through the rest of our lives in a beautiful way.

Crito: What about it? Was Euthydemus willing to display anything to you?

Socrates: How could he not? And he began his speech, my companion, quite magnanimously, like this:

B "Which do you prefer, Socrates," he said; "shall I teach you this knowledge about which you've been stumped all this time, or display that you have it?"

"Oh blessed one!" I said "Is this in your power?"

"Entirely," he said.

"Then display to me that I have it, by Zeus!" I said. "That will be much easier than learning it for a man my age."

"Come on, then, and answer me," he said. "Is there anything you do know?" "Certainly," I said; "lots of things, but small ones." "That's good enough," he said; "and do you think it's possible for any of the **C** things there are not to be that very thing that it happens to be?" "By Zeus, not I." "And you know something?" "I do." "And if you have knowledge, you're knowledgeable?" "Certainly, about just that thing." "That makes no difference; but there's no necessity for you to know everything if you're knowledgeable?" "No, by Zeus, since there are lots of other things I don't know." "And if you don't know something, you're not knowledgeable?" "Not about that, my friend," I said. "So is it any the less the case," he said, "that you're not knowledgeable? While you just now claimed you *are* knowledgeable. And thus you **D** are, and then again are not, precisely this very one who you are, in the same respect at the same time."

"So be it, Euthydemus," I said. "As the saying goes, you're making beautiful noise.[17] So how does that mean I know the knowledge we were looking for? On the grounds that this is impossible, that the same thing both be and not be, then if I know one thing, I know everything—since I couldn't be knowledgeable and not knowledgeable at the same time—and since I know everything, I have that knowledge, is that how you mean it? And this is the piece of wisdom?"

E "Exactly, Socrates," he said; "you provide your own refutation yourself."

"And what about you, Euthydemus?" I said. "Isn't it your lot to suffer the same thing? For I wouldn't be very annoyed, you know, to be suffering anything at all that I shared with you and with our precious friend Dionysodorus here. Tell me, doesn't the pair of you know some of the things there are and not know others?"

17 This is Burnet's reading, following a conjecture by an earlier editor. The manuscripts have "everything you're saying is beautiful." A marginal note on one of the manuscripts assumes what was intended was "you're bringing all beautiful tidings."

"Hardly, Socrates," said Dionysodorus.

"How do mean that, you two," I said. "That the pair of you knows nothing?"

"Oh yes, and plenty," he said.

"Then the pair of you knows everything," I said, "inasmuch as **294A** you know anything?"

"Everything," he said; "and you do too. If you know even one thing, you know everything."

"Zeus!" I said, "What a wonderful thing you're telling, and what a great good to have been revealed. Surely you can't be saying that all the other human beings know everything or else nothing?"

"Well they certainly can't know some things and not know others," he said, "and be knowledgeable and not knowledgeable at the same time."

"But what then?" I said.

"Everybody knows everything," he said, "if he knows even one thing."

"Before the gods, Dionysodorus," I said, "it's clear to me that the **B** pair of you is being serious now, and I had a hard time challenging you folks to get serious. Does the pair of you really know everything yourselves? Like carpentry and leatherwork?"

"Sure," he said.

"And the pair of you is capable of mending shoes?"

"And of making them too, by Zeus," he said.

"And do you know things like how many stars there are, and how much sand?"

"Of course," he said. "Do you imagine we wouldn't grant that too?"

And Ctesippus broke in, saying, "Before Zeus, Dionysodorus, display some piece of evidence of these things to me, the pair of you, **C** of a kind that will make me know you're telling the truth."

"What shall I display?" he said.

"Do you know how many teeth Euthydemus has, and does Euthydemus know how many you have?"

"Isn't it good enough for you to hear that we know everything?" he said.

"None of that," he said; "tell us just this one thing more, though, the pair of you, and display that you're speaking the truth. And if both of you say how many of them the other one of you has, and you're revealed as knowing your stuff when we count them, we'll be convinced from then on about all the rest too."

But since the pair of them thought they were being made fun of, **D** they weren't willing to say, but they were in agreement about having a knowledge of all matters as they were asked about each thing, one by one, by Ctesippus. For there was nothing Ctesippus didn't end up, in a totally uninhibited way, asking whether the pair of them knew,

even the most shameful things, while the two of them met the questions head-on most courageously, agreeing that they knew them, like wild boars rushing toward the spear-thrust, until finally I too, for my
E part, was forced by disbelief to ask whether Dionysodorus knew how to dance. "Certainly," he said.

"Surely you haven't arrived at such an advanced state of wisdom," I said, "that you can somersault over sabers and whirl around on a pottery wheel, as old as you are?"

"There's nothing I can't do," he said.

"And is it only now that the pair of you knows all things," I said, "or did you always know them?"

"Always," he said.

"Even when the pair of you were children, right when you were born, you knew everything?"

They declared so, both together at the same time.

295A The thing seemed unbelievable to us, and Euthydemus said, "You're skeptical, Socrates?"

"Yes," I said, "except that it *is* likely that you fellows are wise."

"Well," he said, "if you're willing to answer my questions, I'll display that you too acknowledge these wondrous things."

"Oh, sure," I said; "I'll be refuted on these matters with the greatest pleasure. For if I really am wise without being aware of it myself, and you're going to display to me this fact that I know everything and always have, what greater godsend than that could I find in all my life?"

"Just answer the questions," he said.

B "Ask and get your answers."

"All right, then, Socrates," he said, "are you knowledgeable about something or not?" "I am." "And are you knowledgeable by means of that by which you have knowledge, or by means of something else?" "I'm knowledgeable by that, for I suppose you mean the soul. Or is that not what you mean?"

"Aren't you ashamed, Socrates, to answer a question with a question?" he said.

"Have it your way," I said, "but then what do I do? For I'll do whatever you tell me. When I don't know what you're asking, are you telling me to answer anyway, and not ask anything about it?"

C "No doubt you have some conception of what I mean," he said, "don't you?"

"I do," I said.

"Then answer in relation to this conception you have."

"And what if you're asking it thinking one thing and I answer it thinking something else?" I said. "When I answer in relation to the latter, will that be good enough for you, even if I'm not answering anything to the point?"

"Good enough for me," he said, "but not for you, I imagine."

"Then, by Zeus, I'm not going to answer," I said, "not before I find out first what's meant."

"You won't answer according to the conception you have on each occasion," he said, "because you keep on babbling and you're too old to be any use."

Now I could tell that he was annoyed with me for making distinc- **D**
tions about what was meant, since he wanted to trap me by tying me up in words. And then I remembered that Connus also gets annoyed with me every time I don't do things his way, and then pays less attention to me, treating me like an ignoramus. So since I was determined to go to this man for lessons too, I thought I'd better give way, so he wouldn't consider me obtuse and refuse to take me as a pupil. So I said, "Well, Euthydemus, if that's the way it seems to you I should **E**
do it, that's the thing to be done, since you, having the art, surely have a more beautiful knowledge in every detail of how to engage in dialectic than I do, as an ordinary human being. So ask the questions again from the beginning."

"Then answer again," he said, "whether you know what you know by means of something or not." "I do," I said, "by means of the soul."

"There he goes again," he said, "giving answers that go beyond **296A**
the questions. I'm not asking by what means but whether you know by some means."

"I did give more of an answer than was required," I said, "out of my lack of education. But forgive me; I'll answer this time simply that I know what I know by means of something." "And always by the same means, or is it sometimes by this means and sometimes by a different one?" "Always by this one," I said, "whenever I know something."

"Again!" he said. "Can't you stop putting in extras out of the side of your mouth?"

"I'm just afraid this 'always' might trip us up in some way."

"Not *us*," he said. "Just you, if anyone. Just answer: do you always **B**
know by this means?" "Always," I said, "since I have to take out the 'whenever.'" "So you always know by this means; and in always knowing, do you know some things by this means by which you know and other things by another means, or all things by this means?" "By this means," I said, "everything that I know."

"There it is," he said; "the same side-of-the-mouth extra comes along."

"I withdraw the words 'that I know,'" I said.

"No, don't withdraw a single thing," he said; "I don't need any help from you. But answer me this: could you know all things without **C**
knowing everything?"

"That would be bizarre," I said.

And he said, "Then add whatever you want now, since you agree that you know all things."

"It looks like I do," I said; "if the words 'that I know' have no force, then I know everything."

"*And* you've agreed that you always know by means of that by which you know, whether that's whenever you know or however you want it. The point is, you've agreed that you *always* know, and at the same time that you know *everything*. So it's clear that you had the
D knowledge even when you were a child, even when you were being born, even when you were being conceived, and even before you became *you*, and before heaven and earth came into being, you knew all things, since you knew them *always*. Yes, and by Zeus," he said, "you yourself always *will* know everything, if that's what I want."

"Please let that be your will, much-honored Euthydemus," I said, "if in fact you're telling the truth. But I don't quite believe you to be capable of it unless your brother Dionysodorus here joins you in willing it; in that case it could probably come true. But tell me, the pair
E of you," I said, "since I could have no hope of disputing the rest of it against human beings of such prodigious wisdom, how *I* can claim to know certain particular things, Euthydemus—not how I know all things, since that's what *you* folks are claiming—but such things as that good men are unjust. Go on and tell me, do I know that or not know it?"

"Of course you know it," he said.

"Know what?" I said.

"The good people are not unjust."

297A "I knew that perfectly well all along," I said. "But that's not what I'm asking; where did I learn that good people are *un*just?"

"Nowhere," said Dionysodorus.

"Therefore I don't know that," I said.

"You're messing up the argument," said Euthydemus to Dionysodorus, "and this fellow here will be revealed as not knowing something, and as being knowledgeable and not knowledgeable at the same time." And Dionysodorus went red in the face.

"But how do you mean that, Euthydemus?" I said. "Does it seem
B to you that your brother, who knows everything, wasn't correct in what he said?"

"I'm Euthydemus's brother?" Dionysodorus put in quickly.

And I said, "Take it easy, good fellow, until Euthydemus has taught me how I know that good men are unjust, and don't begrudge me a chance to learn something."

"You're running away, Socrates," said Dionysodorus, "and your're unwilling to answer the question."

"Well, naturally," I said. "Because I'm a lesser man than either one of you; far be it from me, then, *not* to run away from the two of
C you. For surely I'm much inferior to Heracles, who was incapable of

doing battle with *both* the Hydra and the crab, the former a female sophist who, if anyone cuts off one one head of her argument, has the wisdom to send up many in place of the one, and the latter a certain other sophist who comes from the sea, and has, it seems to me, lately arrived on our shores; and when the latter was pestering him so much by yapping and snapping at him from the left, Heracles called in the help of his nephew Iolaus, who gave him plenty of help. But my Iolaus, **D** if he were to come, would do more harm than good."

"So answer this," said Dionysodorus, "whenever this song of woe of yours is done. Was Iolaus any more Heracles' nephew than yours?"

"Well, Dionysodorus, the best recourse for me is to answer you," I said, "because you're not going to let up on asking questions, that's something I'm pretty sure of, or from being grudging and obstructive, to keep Euthydemus from teaching me that piece of wisdom." "So answer," he said. "So my answer," I said, "is that Iolaus was Heracles' nephew, but no nephew of mine, as it seems to me, in any **E** way whatsoever. For Patrocles was not his father, and he's my brother, though his name is pretty close to that of Iphicles, who was Heracles' brother." "But Patrocles is yours?" he said. "Yes indeed," I said, "by the same mother, though not the same father." "Therefore he's your brother and also not your brother." "Not by the same father, right, most excellent fellow," I said, "because his father was Chaeredemus and mine was Sophroniscus." "Then Sophronicus was a father, and Chaeredemus too?" he said. "Exactly," I said, "one mine, the other **298A** his." "So Chaeredemus was other than a father?" he said. "Other than mine, anyway," I said. "So he was a father while being other than a father? And are you the same as a stone?" "I'm afraid that I'll be revealed by you as the same," I said; "it does not, however, seem to me I am." "So then you're other than a stone?" he said. "Decidedly other." "So does that mean anything else than that, being other than a stone, you're not a stone?" he said; "and being other than gold, you're not gold?" "That's it." "And so Chaeredemus," he said, "being other than a father, is not a father." "It looks like he's not a father," I said.

"For presumably," said Euthydemus, taking it up, "if Chaere- **B** demus is a father, then conversely Sophroniscus in turn, since he's other than a father, is not a father, and you, Socrates, are fatherless."

And Ctesippus took over and said, "And you guys' father too, isn't it his lot to suffer the same thing? Is he other than my father?" "Far from it," Euthydemus said. "Then he's the same?" "Definitely the same." "I should hope not. But is he only my father, Euthydemus, **C** or every other human being's father too?" "Everyone else's too," he said, "or do you imagine that the same person who *is* a father is not a father?" "I certainly would imagine so," Ctesippus said. "What?" he said; "do you imagine something that is gold is not gold, or something that is a human being is not a human being?" "Maybe you're

mixing apples and oranges,[18] Euthydemus, as the saying goes," said Ctesippus; "for it's an alarming thing you're saying if your father is everybody's father." "Well, he is," he said. "Just of human beings,"
D said Ctesippus, "or of horses and all the rest of the animals too?" "Of them all," he said. "And is your mother their mother?" "Oh yes, my mother too." "So therefore your mother is also the mother of the sea urchins," he said. "And yours is too," he said. "So therefore you're a brother of minnows and puppies and piglets." "And so are you," he said. "Therefore your father is a pig and a dog." "Yours too," he said.

"And you'll agree with that at once," said Dionysodorus, "if you answer me. For tell me, do you have a dog?" "Yes," said Ctesippus,
E "a real troublemaker." "And are there any puppies of his?" "Oh yes," he said, "chips off the old block." "So your dog is their father?" "I assure you I saw him myself," he said, "mating with the female." "Why now, isn't this dog yours?" "Very much so," he said. "And since he's a father and he's yours, doesn't it turn out then that the dog is your father and you're the puppies' brother?"

And Dionysodorus quickly interjected again, so Ctesippus would have no chance to say anything before he did, saying, "And just answer me one more little question: do you beat this dog?" And Ctesippus gave a laugh and said, "By the gods I do, because I can't beat you!" "So you beat your own father?" he said.

299A "It would be much more just for me to beat you guys' father," he said, "for even thinking of begetting wise sons like you. But he sure must have had a lot of good to enjoy out of that wisdom of yours, I guess, Euthydemus, that father of the puppies and of you guys."

"Well, he doesn't want a lot of good, Ctesippus, and you don't either."

"Nor you yourself, Euthydemus?" he said.

B "No, and neither does any other human being. For tell me, Ctesippus, whether you consider it good for a sick person to drink medicine when he needs it, or whether that doesn't seem good to you; and when he goes to war, whether it's good to go bearing arms or unarmed." "It seems good to me," he said, "but something tells me you're about to come out with one of your beauties." "You'll be in the best position to know," he said; "just answer. For since you agree that medicine is good for a human being to drink when he needs it, does this mean anything other than that one ought to drink that good thing as much as possible, and in that case, that it would be a beautiful thing if someone ground up a wagonload of hellebore[19] and mixed it into it?" And Ctesippus said, "Oh, most assuredly, Euthydemus, if the

18 Literally, "not tying a linen thread to a linen thread."

19 Either of two varieties of poisonous plants, one used in small doses as a purgative and the other as a treatment for insanity.

one drinking it is the size of the statue at Delphi."[20] "And in war," he said, "since it's good to bear arms, one ought to have as many spears and shields as possible, seeing as how it's good?" "No doubt about it," said Ctesippus; "you don't think so, Euthydemus? Just a single shield and one spear?" "I'd say that." "And that's the way you'd arm Geryon or Briareus?"[21] he said; "I'd have thought you were a more formidable expert, since you're a trainer in heavy-armed fighting, as is this comrade of yours here." C

And Euthydemus went silent, but Dionysodorus started asking Ctesippus about his earlier answers, saying, "And gold seems to you to be a good thing to have?" "Very good, and lots of it," Ctesippus said. "And what about this? Doesn't it seem to you one should have good things always and everywhere?" "Definitely," he said. "And you agree that gold is good?" "I'm in agreement, of course," he said. "So one ought to have it always and everywhere and especially in oneself? And a person would be happiest if he had three hundredweight of gold in his belly, a hundredweight in his skull, and an ounce in each of his two eyes?" "Ah, well, Euthydemus," said Ctesippus, "they do say that the happiest and best men among the Scythians are the ones who have a lot of gold in *their own* skulls, in the same way you were just now saying my dog is my father, and what's still more to be wondered at, they *drink* out of their own gold-lined skulls, and *see* inside them, holding their own heads in their hands."[22] D E

"And do Scythians and all other human beings see things possible or impossible to see?" said Euthydemus. "Possible, no doubt." "And you do too?" he said. "I too." "So you see our cloaks?" "Yes." "So it's possible for them to see?" "Miraculously," said Ctesippus. "To see what?" he said. "Nothing. And you don't believe they see any more than I do; you're such a cute customer. But it seems to me you've dropped off to sleep without lying down, and if it's possible for anyone to speak without saying anything, you're also doing that." 300A

"Then it's not possible for there to be a speaking of the silent?" said Dionysodorus. "Not by any means whatsoever," said Ctesippus. "Or a silence of the speaking?" "Even less," he said. "Well, when you speak of stones and wood and lumps of iron, aren't you speaking of the silent?" "Not if I'm going past the ones in a blacksmith's shop; on the contrary, the lumps of iron are said to cry out and make loud screams, when anyone touches them; so in this case, your wisdom B

20 There was a statue of Apollo there that was said to be about 20 feet tall.

21 Legendary giants, the first with three pairs of hands and the second with fifty.

22 Herodotus reports (*Histories* IV, 64-65) that the Scythians cut off the heads of those they killed in battle, and sawed off the tops of the skulls of their deadliest enemies to use as drinking bowls. Most of them lined these trophies with leather, but the richest of them lined them with gold. Hence a trophy taken from someone a man had killed was a skull and his own, and so by Dionysodorus's own argument about the dog, it was his own skull, and the happiest (richest) among them had gold in their skulls.

made you overlook the fact that you weren't saying anything. But go on and display the other thing to me, the pair of you, how there's also a silence of the speaking."

C It seemed to me that Ctesippus was feeling excessively competitive because his darling was there.

"When you're silent," said Euthydemus, "aren't you silent about everything?" "I am," he said. "So you're silent about the speaking things too, if they're part of everything." "What?" said Ctesippus; "aren't all things silent?" "Presumably not," said Euthydemus. "Ah, you most excellent fellow, then all things speak?" "All the ones that do speak, anyway, presumably." "*But that's not what I asked you*," said Ctesippus; "are all things silent or do all things speak?"

D "Neither and both!" said Dionysodorus, snatching up the argument. "I know very well you won't have a clue how to cope with that answer."

And Ctesippus burst into long loud laughter in his usual way, and said, "Euthydemus, your brother has left his argument exposed on both sides and he's undone and defeated." And Cleinias was totally delighted and laughed, so much so that Ctesippus was puffed up more than tenfold. But it seemed to me, because he's so unscrupulous, that Ctesippus had picked up these very words from these very men, for there is no such wisdom to be found from any other human beings these days.

E And I said, "Why are you laughing at such serious and beautiful things, Cleinias?"

"So, have you ever before seen any beautiful thing, Socrates?" said Dionysodorus.

"I have, lots of them, Dionysodorus," I said.

301A "Were they different from the beautiful, or the same as the beautiful?" he said.

And I was totally stumped, and regarded it as just punishment for putting in my two cents;[23] nevertheless, I said they were different from the beautiful itself, even though there's a certain beauty present with each of them.

"So if a cow comes into your presence, you're a cow," he said, "and because I'm present with you now, you're Dionysodorus?"

"That's blasphemy," I said.

"But in what way could one thing be different by having a different thing present with it?" he said.

B "Does that stump you?" I said. I was already trying to mimic the wisdom of the pair of men, since I yearned to have it.

"Well how could I not be stumped," he said, "I and every other human being, by what cannot be?"

23 Literally, "for (so much as) grunting."

"What do you mean, Dionysodorus?" I said; "isn't a beautiful thing beautiful and an ugly thing ugly?" "If it seems that way to me," he said. "And does it seem that way?" "Of course," he said. "And isn't what's the same the same and what's different different? For presumably the different is not the same, and I wouldn't suppose **C** even a child would be stumped about that, as though what's different were not different. But you must have skipped over that deliberately, Dionysodorus, because it seems to me in every other instance that you fellows, like expert craftsmen who perfect every detail that properly belongs to each, bring your dialectical argument to a perfection that's thoroughly beautiful."

"So you know what properly belongs to each of the craftsmen, do you?" he said; "first of all, do you know whose proper job it is to do metalwork?" "I do: a blacksmith." "What about to make pottery?" "A potter." "What about to slaughter and skin and cut up meat in little pieces and boil and roast it?" "A butcher," I said. "And if anyone does **D** the proper things," he said, "will he do them rightly?" "He most of all." "And was it your claim that cutting up and skinning are proper for the butcher? Did you agree to that or not?" "I agreed," I said; "but have mercy on me." "So!" he said; "then obviously if someone slaughters the butcher, cuts him up, and boils and roasts him, he'll be doing the proper things. And as for the blacksmith, if someone forges him in the fire, or pots the potter, he too will be acting as is appropriate."

"Poseidon!" I said; "now you've put the crowning touch on your **E** wisdom. Could this ever come to be present to me so as to be my very own?"

"Would you recognize it, Socrates," he said, "if it became your very own?"

"If *you* want me to," I said, "it's clear I would."

"What? Do you think you can recognize things that are your own?" he said.

"I do, unless you say something to the contrary, for the beginning must be from you and the end is up to Euthydemus here."[24]

"Well," he said, "do you regard as yours those things you control and have the right to use however you want to? Would you regard **302A** a cow or sheep as yours, for instance, which you had the right to sell or give away or sacrifice to any of the gods you might want to? And things you don't possess in that way are not yours?"

Now I knew from the questions themselves that another beauty was about to rear its head, and I also wanted to hear it as quickly as possible, so I said, "That's exactly how it is; only such things are mine." "And what about this?" he said; "don't you call those things that have soul animals?" "Yes," I said. "And you agree that only those of the **B** animals are yours with which you have the right to do all those things

24 The wording is suggestive of prayer, comparable to "He is alpha and omega."

I just now stated?" "I agree." And he, after an entirely insincere pause as though he were reflecting on some great matter, said, "Tell me, Socrates, do you have an ancestral Zeus?" Now I suspected that the argument was going to arrive at exactly the point where it ended up, so I tried to escape by some hopeless flip-flop and flopped around as though already trapped in a net. "No, Dionysodorus, I don't," I said.
C "Oh, then you're some wretched human refuse and not an Athenian at all, someone who has no gods or shrines or anything else beautiful and good." "Hey, talk nice, Dionysodorus," I said, "and don't give me such a harsh introduction to your teaching; I do have altars and shrines, both domestic and ancestral, and all the other things of that sort that the rest of the Athenians have." "Well, don't the rest of the Athenians have an ancestral Zeus?" "No," I said, "none of the Ionians use that form of address, not those who have settled away from
D this city, and we don't either; we have an ancestral Apollo because of his begetting of Ion, but among us, Zeus is not called ancestral but household and tribal, like tribal Athena." "That's good enough," said Dionysodorus, "since it seems you have an Apollo, a Zeus, and an Athena." "Quite so," I said. "So they would be your gods?" he said. "My progenitors and lords," I said. "But yours at least," he said; "or are you not in agreement that they're yours?" "I'm in agreement,"
E I said; "what can I do?" "So these gods are also animals?" he said; "for you've agreed that all things that have a soul are animals. Or don't these gods have soul?" "They do," I said. "So they're animals?" "Animals," I said. "And among the animals," he said, "you've agreed that all those are yours which you have the right to give away, sell, or sacrifice to whatever god you want to." "I've agreed to that," I said; "I have no means of retreat, Euthydemus." "Come on then, tell me
303A straight," he said: "since you agree that Zeus and the other gods are yours, don't you have the right to sell them, give them away, or use them any other way you want to, just like other animals?"

Now, Crito, it was as if I'd gotten a knock-out punch from the argument and was lying there speechless, when Ctesippus, stepping in to give me some relief, said, "Bully! Heracles! What a beautiful argument!" And Dionysodorus said, "Well, which is it? Is Heracles a bully or is a bully Heracles?" And Ctesippus said, "Poseidon, what formidable arguments! I give up; this pair of men is unbeatable."

B At that point, Crito my friend, let me tell you, there was not a single one of those present who didn't give extravagant praise to the argument and to the pair of men; why, they almost passed out from laughing and clapping and cheering. For on the previous occasions, in each and every case, there were resounding and utterly beautiful cheers, but only from Euthydemus's lovers, but at that point even the pillars of the Lyceum virtually reverberated with pleasure at the pair of men. And I myself was inclined that way as well, so much so
C as to agree that never before had I laid eyes on anyone so wise; I was

an absolutely enthralled by the pair's wisdom, driven to the point of extoling them and singing their praises, and I said, "You happy pair, blessed with a wondrous nature, to have perfected so great a matter so speedily in so short a time! There are many other beautiful things contained in the arguments you fellows make, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, but among them there is this one that is especially a mark of the greatest grandeur, namely the fact that you don't care one bit about the general run of human beings or even about those **D** pompous ones who have the reputation of being really something, but only about people like you. For I know very well that there are very few human beings like you who would appreciate these arguments; everyone else is so ignorant about them that I know very well they'd be more ashamed to refute other people by arguments of that sort than to be refuted themselves. And there is this other thing too that makes your arguments democratic and easygoing: whenever you fellows claim that no single thing is beautiful or good or white or anything else like that, and nothing is any different at all from anything else, **E** you just really and truly sew the mouths of human beings shut, as you even say.[25] The fact that you not only sew up the mouths of others, but would seem even to sew up your own, is a very gracious thing, and takes the sting out of your arguments. But the greatest thing is that these methods of yours are of such a kind and have been so artfully devised that in a very short time any human being whatsoever can learn them. I realized this by paying attention to the way Ctesippus was able so quickly to imitate you fellows on the spot. So this wise **304A** aspect of your occupation that has to do with imparting it quickly is a beautiful thing, but it's not suitable for discussing things in front of human beings, and if you'll take my word for it, you should be wary about speaking in front of large groups, because they might not give you credit when they learn it quickly. The best thing would be for the pair of you to have discussions alone between yourselves, or failing that, if it is in front of anyone else, for that to be only someone who's giving you cash. And if you're sensible about it, you'll give this same **B** advice to your pupils, never to have discussions with any human being other than you fellows and themselves. For what is scarce is held in honor, Euthydemus, while water is the cheapest thing there is, even though, as Pindar says, it's the best. Come on, though," I said, "and take Cleinias here and me on as pupils."

25 At 275E, Dionysodorus, in an aside to Socrates, bragged that whichever way Cleinias answered them, they'd refute him. In Plato's *Cratylus* (386D), Socrates says that according to Euthydemus, "all attributes belong equally to all things at the same time always." Socrates can generalize about the brothers' underlying assumption in that way, and in the ways he does in this speech, because they refute an assertion not by exploring what might be true instead, but by depriving the speaker of the ability to use any predicate he's using at the time without asserting its opposite at the same time.

When these things and some other brief discussion done, Crito, we went away. So see about joining us in taking lessons from the
C two men, since they claim the pair of them is willing and able to teach anyone who gives them cash, and no sort of nature or age is any barrier—and what is especially appropriate for you to hear, the pair claims that nothing about it interferes with one's moneymaking activity—to keep anyone whatever from getting hold of their wisdom with no trouble at all.

Crito: Well, Socrates, I'm certainly a lover of listening, and I'd be glad to learn something, but it's likely I'm also one of those who aren't
D like Euthydemus, that I'm precisely one of those you were speaking of who'd rather be refuted by such arguments than do the refuting. And despite the fact that it seems laughable for me to be giving you advice, all the same I want to tell you something I heard. You should know that one of those who were leaving your group came over to me while I was taking a walk, a man who imagines himself to be very wise, one of those who are formidable where speeches in the lawcourts are concerned, and said, "Crito, haven't you been listening to these wise goings-on?" "No, by Zeus," I said; "I was unable to stand close enough to hear because of the crowd." "Well," he said, "it sure would've been worth hearing." "In what
E way?" I said. "So you could have listened to dialectic among men who are the wisest of the present day where speeches of that sort are concerned." And I said, "So what was revealed to you?" "What else," he said, "but the very sort of stuff one always hears from people who spout such drivel and put an unworthy seriousness into worthless business?" (For this was the very manner and these the very words he spoke.) And I said, "But surely philosophy is
305A a charming thing." "Charming my foot, you blessed fellow," he said; "it's not worth anything. And if you'd been there just now, I can well imagine you'd have been ashamed of your companion. He was so ridiculous, the way he was willing to submit himself to human beings who don't care what they say, but snatch at every phrase. And these, as I was just saying, are the most powerful of those of the present day. Well, Crito, the business itself and the human beings who waste their time at that business are pathetic
B and utterly ridiculous." But it didn't seem right to me, Socrates, for him to blame the business, or for anyone else to blame it either. It did, however, seem right to me for someone to be blamed for being willing to engage in that sort of dialectic in front of the general run of human beings.

Socrates: Men like that are a wonder to me, Crito. Still, I don't yet know what I should say. Of which sort was the one who came up to you and cast blame on philosophy? Was he one of the formidable competitors in the lawcourts, a rhetorician, or one of those who

send such people in, a composer of speeches for the rhetoricians to compete with?

Crito: Anything but a rhetorician, by Zeus, and I don't believe he's ever **C** mounted the podium in a lawcourt, but they say he understands the business, by Zeus, and that he's a formidable man and puts together formidable speeches.

Socrates: Now I get you. And these are the people I myself was just now going to speak of. For they're the ones, Crito, who Prodicus says are the borderline between a philosophic man and a political one, and they believe they're the wisest human beings of all, and that they not only *are* but seem that way too to very many people, so that no other human beings besides the ones involved **D** with philosophy stand between them and being esteemed by everyone. So they think that if they can bring *them* down in reputation, and make them seem to be of no worth, they themselves will henceforth be imagined by everyone to hold the undisputed championship in reputation for wisdom. Because they think that while the truth is they're the wisest ones, when they get trapped into private discussions, they're diminished in stature by those in Euthydemus's circle. But they consider themselves to be perfectly wise—naturally, on the perfectly reasonable grounds that they are moderately good at philosophy and moderately good at politics— **E** since they take part in both as far as one has any need to, in order to reap the fruits of wisdom while keeping themselves outside of the risks and competitions.

Crito: And what about it? Does it seem to you that there's anything in what they say, Socrates? For the argument the men make can't help but have some plausibility.

Socrates: That's what it does have, Crito, more plausibility than truth. **306A** For it's not easy to persuade them that human beings, like everything else that's in the middle ground of any pair of things and manages to have a share in both, in those cases in which the pair consists of a bad thing and a good one, end up being better than the one and worse than the other; in those cases in which the pair consists of two good things not directed to the same end, they end up worse than both the things of which it's composed in relation to the end for which each is useful; and when they're in the middle ground of pairs composed of two bad things not directed to the same end, these are the only cases in which they're better than **B** each of those things of which they have a partial share of both. So if philosophy is a good thing and political action is too, each in relation to a different end, and those who take part in both are in the middle ground between them, there's nothing in what they say—since they're inferior to both—while if one is good and the other bad, they're better than people of the one sort and worse than people of the other; if both are bad things, there would in that

case be some truth in what they say, but none at all in any other
C case. Now I don't imagine they'd agree either that this pair is bad on both sides, or that one thing is bad and the other good. So the truth of it is, these people who take part in both pursuits are lesser than people on both sides in relation to each of the two ends for which the pair consisting of politics and philosophy is worthy of mention, and while they are in truth in third place, they seek to be thought of as in first. So one should make allowances for them because of their desires, and not be hard on them, but still regard them as being what they are; for one should be satisfied with any
D man whatever who says any thing whatever that borders on intelligence, and works hard at putting it into practice courageously.

Crito: Well, you know, Socrates, when it comes to my sons, I myself, as I'm always telling you, am at my wits' end about what I ought to do with them. The younger one is still little, but Critobulus is already grown up and needs someone who can give him some help. Now when I'm around you, I'm inclined in such a way that it seems lunacy to me to have gone to such serious trouble in so many other
E ways for the sake of my children, about marrying in such a way that they'd come from the most nobly born mother, about money so they'd be as rich as possible, and then to be negligent about their education. But whenever I take a look at any of the people who claim to educate human beings, I'm flabbergasted, and each one of them, when I consider him, seems to me to be utterly preposterous,
307A since I can speak truthfully to you. So I don't have a clue how I'm to encourage the young man toward philosophy.

Socrates: Crito my friend, don't you know that in every pursuit, inferior people are numerous and worth nothing while those of serious stature are few and worth everything? Doesn't gymnastic exercise seem to you to be a beautiful thing, as well as skill at moneymaking and at rhetoric and at generalship?

Crito: By all means, they do to me.

B *Socrates*: Well then, in every one of these, don't you see that most people are laughably bad at every task?

Crito: Yes, by Zeus, there's a lot of truth in what you say.

Socrates: So on that account are you going to avoid all those pursuits and not let your son engage in them?

Crito: That would not be just, Socrates.

Socrates: Then don't do something you shouldn't, Crito; just let those who pursue philosophy go their merry way, whether they're wholesome or corrupt people, and test the soundness of the thing itself
C beautifully and well, and if it reveals itself to you as something worthless, then warn *every* man away from it and not just your sons. But if it reveals itself to be the sort of thing *I* believe it is, then pursue it and practice it boldly, exactly as that saying goes, yourself and your children too.

HIPPIAS MAJOR[1]

Outline of the dialogue

281A-286C	Hippias tells Socrates about the beauty of sophistry, his own beautiful speeches, and the beautiful things he speaks about, and invites Socrates to attend his next display.
286C-287E	Socrates passes along a question he says was posed to him by someone, What *is* the beautiful?
287E-289E	Hippias gives his first answer: the beautiful is a beautiful girl. Socrates mentions some objections the unnamed questioner would make, and restates the question as, What is that by which *everything* beautiful is made beautiful.
289E-291D	Hippias gives his second answer: what makes everything beautiful is gold. The objections Socrates passes on this time cause the question to become, What is that which would never appear ugly in any respect to anyone.
291D-293E	Hippias gives his third answer: to be rich, honored, healthy, and old, give a beautiful funeral to one's parents and be given one by one's children. The unnamed objector would find fault with this answer as well.
293E-295E	Socrates offers an answer of a different sort: the beautiful is the appropriate. Hippias agrees, but gives an example that exposes a flaw in this answer too.
295E-297E	Socrates tries a second answer: the beautiful is the useful. This answer too fails to capture the nature of the beautiful.
297E-303D	Socrates makes a third try: the beautiful is what brings pleasure through seeing and hearing. But does that describe two kinds of beauty or one whole experienced through sight and hearing together? The answer fails on either interpretation.
303D-end	Hippias rebukes Socrates for listening to arguments that tear apart things one knew perfectly well before examining them. Socrates reveals that the unnamed questioner and critic he has been listening to is himself.

1 Two dialogues called *Hippias,* of which this is the longer, were in circulation in antiquity. The genuineness of each has been questioned; the majority opinion of scholars shifted in the course of the twentieth century toward regarding the *Hippias Major* as a genuine work of Plato.

281A *Socrates*: It's Hippias, the beautiful and wise; what a long time it's been since you stopped off with us in Athens.

Hippias: I have no free time, Socrates. Whenever Elis needs to get anything done with any of the cities, they always come to me as their first choice among the citizens to be the ambassador, since they consider me the most competent judge and messenger of
B what's said by each of the cities. So I've often gone on missions to other cities, and most often and on the most important matters to Sparta. So that's why, as you're asking, I'm not a frequent visitor to these parts.

Socrates: Well, Hippias, that's what it is to be a truly wise and perfect man. For you're competent in private life at getting a lot of money
C out of the young for giving them even more profit than you get, and you're also competent in public life at doing service for your own city, just as someone should if he's not to be looked down on but thought well of among the general run of people. But then what in the world is the reason, Hippias, why those ancients who are given great names for wisdom,[2] Pittacus and Bias and those around Thales of Miletus and still later, down to Anaxagoras, why all or most of them conspicuously refrained from actions related to politics?

Hippias: Why do you think, Socrates, except that they lacked the power
D and weren't competent by their intelligence to be accomplished in both directions at once, with the common things and the private ones?

Socrates: Well by Zeus, could it be that in the same way the other arts have advanced, and the ancients are worthless compared to workmen nowadays, we should say that the art belonging to you sophists has advanced as well and that, where wisdom is concerned, those of ancient times are worthless in comparison with you folks?

Hippias: You've got it exactly right.

Socrates: So, Hippias, if Bias were to be as he was in life with us, he'd
282A bring ridicule down on himself in comparison with you folks, just as the sculptors say about Daedalus,[3] that if he were to come along today and produce the sort of works he got his name from, he'd be ridiculous.

Hippias: That's it, Socrates; it's just as you say. I, however, am in the habit of giving the ancients and our forebears the foremost and

2 The first three named were among the so-called seven wise men, and in fact they earned their high reputations for their statesmanship. Thales was also regarded as the first philosopher, and Anaxagoras was one of a number of similar thinkers living in the Ionian Greek colonies in Asia Minor. Pronounce the *i* in Bias as a long *e* to catch the pun a few lines below.

3 A legendary sculptor referred to in Plato's *Euthyphro* (11C) and *Meno* (97D), whose works were so lifelike they were said to move their eyes and walk.

greater praise, rather than those of today, careful of the envy of the living and fearful of the wrath of the dead.

Socrates: Beautifully done by you, Hippias, in both your choice of words and your thinking, it seems to me. And I'm in a position to bear witness along with you that you're telling the truth and that the art of you folks really has advanced in having the power to carry out public actions together with private ones. For Gorgias, the renowned sophist from Leontini,[4] came here on public business as an ambassador from his home town, on the grounds that he's the most competent of the Leontinians at acting on common matters, and he made the best impression at speaking in the public arena, while also, in private, by making displays and associating with the young, he earned a lot of money and took it out of this city. Or, if you like, there's our pal, the renowned Prodicus, who came on many other occasions on public business, but the last time he came from Ceos on public business, just recently, he was very well regarded for speaking in the council, and in private, by making displays and associating with the young, he took away a wondrous sum of money. But not a one of those ancients ever saw fit to earn a fee in cash or to make displays of their own wisdom among all and sundry human beings; they were such simpletons that they didn't realize how great the value of cash is. But each of these two has made more cash than any other workman has made out of any art whatever, and even before them, Protagoras did too. **B** **C** **D**

Hippias: Why, Socrates, you don't know even part of the beauty of this. If you knew how much cash *I've* made, you *would* be in wonder. I'll pass over the rest of it, but once when I went to Sicily, Protagoras was on a visit there, older and more highly thought-of though he was, and I, though much younger, in a short time made considerably more than a hundred and fifty thousand,[5] more than twenty thousand out of the one very small region of Inycum. When I got home bringing this and gave it to my father, he and all the rest of his fellow citizens were struck with wonder and astonishment. I imagine I've pretty well made more money than any other two sophists you like put together. **E**

Socrates: A beautiful point you make, Hippias, and a great proof of wisdom both on your own part and on the part present-day human beings, for how greatly they surpass the ancients. For by your account, the ignorance of the earlier people was vast, since **283A**

4 Gorgias laughed at the claims made by sophists and insisted that he was exclusively a teacher of rhetoric (*Meno*, 95C). Socrates' reference to him here picks up on Hippias's use, at the end of his last speech, of the type of balanced antithesis that was Gorgias's signature rhetorical device.

5 Literally 150 minas. A mina was 100 drachmas, and a drachma was considered a good wage for a day's work by a skilled workman. In 2008 dollars, hundreds of thousands would give a general idea of the scale of Hippias's takings.

it's said that what happened to Anaxagoras was the opposite of what happens to you folks. Despite the fact that a lot of money was left to him, he was inattentive to it and lost it all—that's how he used his wisdom: without intellect.[6] And they say other things of that sort about the rest of the ancients too.[7] So you seem to me
B to be revealing a beautiful proof of the wisdom of present-day people as compared to earlier ones, and it seems to lots of folks as well that a wise man himself ought to be wise on his own behalf most of all, and the one who bears the mark of this, consequently, is whoever has made the most cash. So let that be enough on that score. But tell me this: which of the cities you go to have you made the most cash out of? Or is it obvious that it's Sparta, since that's where you've gone most often?

Hippias: No, Socrates, by Zeus!

Socrates: How do you mean? That it was the least?

C *Hippias*: That it was absolutely nothing at any time.

Socrates: That's a monstrous thing you're saying, Hippias, and one to be wondered at. But tell me, isn't this wisdom of yours the sort that makes those who are around it and learn it better people as far as virtue is concerned?

Hippias: Very much so, Socrates.

Socrates: And while you were able to make the sons of the Inycans better, you were powerless with those of the Spartans?

Hippias: I'm far from *that*.

Socrates: Well then, do Sicilians have a desire to become better while
D Spartans don't?

Hippias: The Spartans do too, Socrates, beyond any doubt.

Socrates: Well did they avoid your company because of a lack of money?

Hippias: Certainly not; they have enough.

Socrates: Then why would it be, when they have the desire and have money, and you have the power to bestow the greatest benefits on them, that they didn't send you away loaded with cash? Is this it, that the Spartans could educate their own children better than you could? Is that the way we should put it? Do you go along with that?

E *Hippias*: Not in any way whatsoever.

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6 Anaxagoras claimed that intellect rules all things, but according to Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo* (97B-99C), he made no use of that hypothesis in his explanation of anything.

7 Once again, as with the claim that the ancient wise men refrained from politics, Socrates is stating the opposite of commonly accepted facts. Thales made the first recorded accurate prediction of a solar eclipse, and other predictions as well; one of the best-known stories about him tells how he made a fortune by cornering the market on what might be called olive oil futures. See Aristotle's *Politics*, Bk. I, Chap. 11.

Socrates: So were you unable to persuade the youth of Sparta that they'd advance further in virtue by being around you than around their own people, or did you lack the power to persuade their fathers that they should leave the matter to you rather than tend to it themselves, if indeed they cared about their sons at all? For presumably they didn't begrudge their own children the chance to become the best they could be.

Hippias: *I* don't think they begrudged it.

Socrates: But surely Sparta has good laws.

Hippias: How could one think otherwise? **284A**

Socrates: And in cities with good laws, virtue is the thing held in highest honor.

Hippias: Very much so.

Socrates: And you of all human beings know how to pass that on to another in the most beautiful way.

Hippias: Most by far, Socrates.

Socrates: Well, wouldn't the person who knows how to pass on horsemanship in the most beautiful way be honored in Thessaly the most of all Greece, and get the most money there and wherever else that's taken seriously?

Hippias: Likely so.

Socrates: So won't the person who has the power to pass on the kinds of learning worth most for leading to virtue be honored most in **B** Sparta, and make the most money if he wants to, and also in any other Greek city governed by good laws? But you, my friend, think he'll do better in Sicily and in Inycum? Is that what we should believe, Hippias? For if *you* say so, it has to be believed.

Hippias: Yes, because it's not the hereditary thing for Spartans to change their laws, Socrates, or educate their sons outside their customary ways.

Socrates: How do you mean? Is it the hereditary thing for Spartans not to act rightly but go astray? **C**

Hippias: *I* wouldn't say so, Socrates.

Socrates: And wouldn't they be acting rightly by educating the youth better rather than worse?

Hippias: That would be the right thing, but it's not lawful for them to provide a foreign education. But you can be sure that if anyone else ever did get money from there for education, I'd get the most by far—they cheer and applaud when they listen to me, anyway—it's just not the law, as I say.

Socrates: But Hippias, do you say law is a harmful or beneficial thing **D** for a city?

Hippias: I assume it's set down for the sake of benefit, but sometimes also does harm, if the law is set down badly.

Socrates: What? Don't those who set down the law set it down to be the greatest good for a city? Without that, isn't it impossible for it to live under good laws?

Hippias: What you say is true.

Socrates: Therefore, whenever those who undertake to set down laws go astray from what's good, they go astray from what's lawful and
E from law? Or how would you put it?

Hippias: In precise terms, that's how it is, Socrates; human beings, however, are not accustomed to put it in those words.

Socrates: The ones who have knowledge, Hippias, or the ones who don't?

Hippias: Most people.

Socrates: Most people? Are they the ones who know what's true?

Hippias: No indeed.

Socrates: But surely one may assume that those who do know consider that what's truly more beneficial for all human beings is what's more lawful, rather than what's less beneficial, or don't you go along with that?

Hippias: Yes, I go along with the *truly* anyway.

Socrates: But it *is* and always is the way those who know consider it to be?

Hippias: Certainly.

285A *Socrates*: And for the Spartans, as *you* claim, the education given by you, which is a foreign one, *is* a more beneficial way to be educated than the local one.

Hippias: And what I say is true.

Socrates: And do you say this too, Hippias, that the more beneficial things are the more lawful ones?

Hippias: I *did* say it.

Socrates: Therefore, by your statement, it's more lawful for the sons of the Spartans to be educated by Hippias, and more contrary to law for them to be educated by their fathers, if in fact they really will be benefited more by you.

B *Hippias*: Oh, they certainly will be benefited, Socrates.

Socrates: Therefore the Spartans are being lawless when they don't give you gold and turn their sons over to you.

Hippias: I go along with that, for you seem to me to be making an argument that goes my way, and there's no need for *me* to oppose it.

Socrates: So, my friend, we find the Spartans to be lawbreakers, and in the greatest matters at that, though they're reputed to be the most law-abiding of all. So before the gods, then, what sort of things do they applaud and delight in when they listen to you? Or is it obvious
C that they're the things you have the most beautiful knowledge of, that have to do with the stars and what goes on in the heavens?

Hippias: Not in any way, shape, or form. They can't even bear them.

Socrates: Ah, then they take delight when they hear you say something about geometry?

Hippias: Not at all, since one might say a lot of them can't even *count*.

Socrates: Then they're a long way from bearing up under a presentation by you on the theory of numerical ratios.

Hippias: A long way for sure, by Zeus.

Socrates: Well, then, is it those things about which you know how to make the most precise distinctions of any human being, having to **D** do with the force of letters, syllables, rhythms, and euphony?

Hippias: Euphony and letters my foot, you good fellow!

Socrates: So then what are the things they listen to you with pleasure about and applaud? Tell me yourself, since I can't find it out.

Hippias: Things about the races of heroes and humans, Socrates, and migrations by which cities were founded in ancient times, and in short, they listen with the greatest pleasure to all talk about antiq- **E** uity, so because of them *I*'ve been forced to learn off all that sort of thing and study up on it.

Socrates: Ah yes, by Zeus, Hippias, you're lucky the Spartans don't delight in hearing someone recite to them our archons from Solon on down; otherwise you'd have a hard time learning *them* off.

Hippias: Why's that, Socrates? I can memorize fifty names by hearing them once.

Socrates: That's true; I didn't remember that you have a memory technique. So I get the idea that the Spartans take delight in you, as one **286A** might expect, as someone who knows a lot, and they use you the way children use old women, for pleasant storytelling.

Hippias: Yes, by Zeus, Socrates, and about beautiful pursuits, and I just lately got a good reputation in that very place for going through the pursuits a young person ought to engage in. For I have a speech about them that I've composed with the utmost beauty, well designed in other respects and especially in its choice of words. My premise and starting point for the speech is something like this: when Troy was taken, the story goes that Neoptolemus **B** asked Nestor what the beautiful pursuits are, the ones that would gain the highest reputation for anyone who pursued them when young. So after that, the one speaking is Nestor, putting forth for him a great abundance of lawful observances of the utmost beauty. I gave that display there and I intend to give it here the day after tomorrow, in Pheidostratus's classroom, along with many other things worth hearing. Apemantus's son Eudicus invited me. Make sure to be there yourself and to bring others who are competent to **C** judge discourses when they hear them.

Socrates: That will come to pass, god willing, Hippias. Now, though, answer me one brief thing about it, for you jogged my memory in a beautifully apt way. Just recently, most excellent fellow, someone

hurled me into a quandary when I was criticizing some things in some speeches as ugly and praising others as beautiful, by questioning me very insolently in something like this way: "On what
D basis, pray tell, Socrates," he said, "do you know which sorts of things are beautiful and ugly? Come on, tell me if you can, what *is* the beautiful?" And I, because of my incompetence, was completely at a loss, and had no decent answer to give him. So as I left the gathering, I was angry and reproachful with myself, and I made myself a stern promise that the first time I bumped into one of you wise men, I'd listen and learn and study and then go back to the one who'd asked the question and join battle again in the argument. So now, as I was saying, you've come along with beautiful
E timing; just teach me enough about what the beautiful itself is, and try in answering to tell it to me with as much precision as possible so I won't open myself up to ridicule again by being refuted for a second time. For no doubt you have a clear knowledge of it, and this would doubtless be one tiny learnable item out of the many things you know.

Hippias: That's for sure, by Zeus, Socrates, tiny and, one might say, of no value.

Socrates: Then I'll learn it easily, and no one will refute me any more.

Hippias: No one will, that's for sure, or else my line of work would be
287A a shabby and unprofessional thing.

Socrates: Well put, by Hera, Hippias, if we're going to get the better of the man. But will it cause any problem if I impersonate him and make objections to the things you say when you answer, so you can give me as much training as possible? Because I'm fairly experienced at making objections. So if it makes no difference to you, I'd like to make objections in order to strengthen what I learn.

Hippias: Make objections, then. For as I was saying just now, the
B question is no big thing; I could teach you to answer much harder ones than that, so that no human being would have the power to refute you.

Socrates: Wow! That's so well put. Let's get to it then, and since you tell me to, come along while I try as much as possible to *become* that man in order to ask you questions. Because if you were to make a display to him of that speech that you tell of, the one about the beautful pursuits, when he heard it, as soon as you stopped speaking, the first question he'd ask would be none other than the one
C about the beautiful—that's sort of a habit he has—and he'd say, "Stranger from Elis, isn't it on account of justice that the just are just?" So give your answer, Hippias, as if he asked that.

Hippias: I answer that it's on account of justice.

Socrates: "And there *is* such a thing as this, justice?"

Hippias: Very much so.

Socrates: "And it's on account of wisdom that the wise are wise, and on account of the good that all good things are good?"
Hippias: How could it be otherwise?
Socrates: "There *being* such things as these, since presumably that couldn't be so if there were not."
Hippias: There are, that's for sure.
Socrates: "And isn't it also on account of the beautiful that all beautiful things are beautiful?" **D**
Hippias: Yes, on account of the beautiful.
Socrates: "There *being* such a thing as that?"
Hippias: There is. What else is it going to be?
Socrates: "So, stranger," he'll say, "tell me what that is; what is the beautiful?"
Hippias: But Socrates, is the person who asks this seeking to find out anything other than what is beautiful?
Socrates: It doesn't seem that way to me, Hippias, but what the beautiful is.
Hippias: And how is that different from the other?
Socrates: It doesn't seem any different to you?
Hippias: No, because there *is* no difference.
Socrates: Well, surely it's clear that you have the more beautiful knowledge. But all the same, good fellow, look here: he's not asking you *what* is beautiful, but what the beautiful *is*. **E**
Hippias: I understand, good fellow, and I'm going to give him his answer about what the beautiful is, and there's no way I'll ever be refuted. For Socrates, you can be sure, if one must speak the truth, a beautiful girl *is* something beautiful.
Socrates: Oh, Hippias, by the dog,[8] that's a beautiful and glorious answer you gave! So is there anything else to say, other than that, if I give this answer, I will have answered what was asked and **288A** answered it rightly and there's no way I'll ever be refuted?
Hippias: How could you be refuted, Socrates, for what seems so to everyone and what everyone who hears it will testify for you that you're speaking the truth?
Socrates: So be it; very well, then. So, come on, Hippias, and I'll take up what you say on my own. He'll ask me something like this: "Come on and answer me, Socrates. *All* those things that you say are beautiful would be beautiful if the beautiful itself is *what*?" Shall I say that if a beautiful girl is beautiful, she is that on account of which those things would be beautiful?

8 This was an oath frequently used by Socrates in Plato's dialogues, but rarely found elsewhere. In Plato's *Gorgias* (482B), the dog in question is revealed as Anubis, an Egyptian god corresponding to the Greek god Hermes. Eva Brann (*The Music of the Republic*, Paul Dry Press, 2004, pp. 118-119) argues that it is particularly the role of Hermes as guide of Heracles that the oath invokes, for the truly Herculean labor involved in knowing onself.

B *Hippias*: Do you imagine that he'll still try to refute you and claim that what you say is not beautiful, or that if he does try, he won't be an object of ridicule?

Socrates: I know very well that he'll try, you wondrous fellow. As for whether, when he has tried, he'll be an object of ridicule, the thing itself will show. I'm willing to tell you what he'll ask, though.

Hippias: Tell it, then.

Socrates: "What a sweet thing you are, Socrates," he'll say. "And isn't a beautiful female horse something beautiful, which even the god **C** praised in his oracle?"[9] What are we going to say, Hippias? Is there anything else for us to say, other than that a horse is beautiful too, a beautiful one, that is? For how could we dare deny that a beautiful thing is beautiful?

Hippias: You're telling the truth, Socrates, since I assure you the god had it right too in what he said. For horses of the utmost beauty are bred in our region.

Socrates: Then he'll say, "Okay, what about a beautiful lyre? Isn't that beautiful?" Shall we say so, Hippias?

Hippias: Yes.

Socrates: Then after that he'll ask (I know pretty well, judging by his usual manner), "What about a beautiful pot, you most excellent fellow? After all, isn't that beautiful?"

D *Hippias*: Who is this person, Socrates? How uncultured for anyone to dare utter the names of such insignificant things in an elevated proceeding.

Socrates: That's the way he is, Hippias, not refined, just trashy; he doesn't give a thought to anything other than what's true. Still, an answer needs to be given to the man, and I'll declare myself first: if the pot were crafted by a good potter, smooth and rounded and beautifully fired, the way some of those beautiful two-handled pots are, that hold four gallons, thoroughly beautiful ones, if he was **E** asking about that sort of pot, it would have to be acknowledged to be beautiful. For how could we claim something that is beautiful isn't beautiful?

Hippias: There's no way, Socrates.

Socrates: "So a beautiful pot is something beautiful too?" he'll say; "give your answer."

Hippias: Well, Socrates, this is the way it is, I believe: this implement is beautiful too, when it's beautifully fashioned, but that sort of thing as a whole is not worth judging as being beautiful in comparison with a horse and a girl and all the other beautiful things.

289A *Socrates*: Okay, Hippias; I understand, then, that the way one ought to counter someone who says those things is like this: "Fellow, you're unaware that the saying of Heracleitus is a good one, that 'the most

9 There is a record of an oracle that refers to the excellence of Thracian mares and Spartan women.

beautiful ape is ugly when put next to the race of human beings,' and the most beautiful pot is ugly when put next to the race of girls—so says Hippias the wise. Isn't that the way, Hippias?

Hippias: Yes, Socrates, you're answering quite rightly.

Socrates: Listen, then, for I'm sure that after that he'll say, "What about this, Socrates? If one puts the race of girls next to the race of gods, **B** won't they have exactly the same thing happen to them as the race of pots put next to that of girls? Won't the most beautiful girl be revealed as ugly? And doesn't Heracleitus, to whom you refer, say this very thing, that "the wisest of human beings is revealed as an ape in comparison with a god, in wisdom and beauty and everything else"? Shall we agree, Hippias, that the most beautiful girl is ugly in comparison with the race of gods?

Hippias: Yes, for who could deny that, Socrates?

Socrates: Well if we agree to that, he'll laugh and say, "And do you **C** remember what you were asked, Socrates?" "I do," I'll say; "it was what the beautiful itself is." "So then," he'll say, "when asked for the beautiful, you answer with something that turns out to be, as you yourself say, no more beautiful than ugly?" "It looks like I did," I'll say; or what do you advise me to say, my friend?

Hippias: Just that, I'd say; for certainly in comparison with gods, anyway, in saying that the human race is not beautiful, you'll be telling the truth.

Socrates: "And if I had asked you from the start," he'll say, "what is *both* beautiful and ugly, if you had answered me the same way **D** you do now, wouldn't you have answered rightly? But does it still seem to you that the beautiful itself—that by which everything else, whenever this form is joined to it, is beautified and appears beautiful—that *this* is a girl or a horse or a lyre?"

Hippias: Oh, well, sure, Socrates, if *that*'s what he's looking for, that of all things is the easiest to answer him, what the beautiful is by which everything else is beautified, and appears beautiful when that is joined to it. The fellow is a complete simpleton, and doesn't notice **E** anything about beautiful possessions. For if you answer him that this thing he's asking about, the beautiful, is nothing other than *gold*, he'll be stymied and won't make any effort to refute you. For doubtless we all know that wherever this is joined to anything, even if it appeared ugly before, it will appear beautiful when it's beautified by gold.

Socrates: You're unacquainted with the man, Hippias, and don't realize how relentless he is; he's not going to accept anything easily.

Hippias: What of it, Socrates? If something is rightly said, he'll neces- **290A** sarily accept it, or be ridiculous for not accepting it.

Socrates: Not only will he most certainly *not* accept this answer, most excellent man, he'll laugh me to scorn and say, "You're under a delu-

sion; do you imagine Pheidias was a bad artisan?" And I imagine I'll say "By no means!"

Hippias: And you'll be right in saying it, Socrates.

Socrates: Right for sure. And consequently, when I agree that Pheidias
B was a good artisan, *he* will say, "Well, then, do you imagine Pheidias was unaware of that beautiful that you're talking about?" And I'll say, "Why, exactly?" He'll say, "Because he didn't make Athena's eyes golden, or the rest of her face, or her feet or hands, if indeed it was just by being golden that they were going to appear most beautiful; he made them ivory. Obviously he went astray in this matter as a result of ignorance, being unaware that it's gold, after all, that makes all things beautiful wherever it's joined with them." What shall we answer him when he says that, Hippias?

C *Hippias*: No problem; we'll say that he made it rightly, since ivory is beautiful too, I presume.

Socrates: "Then for what purpose," he'll say, "did he not fashion the in-between parts of the eyes out of ivory too, but out of stone, with stone as similar to ivory as he could possibly find? Or is beautiful stone a beautiful thing too?" Shall we say it is, Hippias?

Hippias: We'll say it is indeed, whenever it's appropriate.

Socrates: "And when it's not appropriate, it's ugly?" Should I agree to that or not?

Hippias: Agree that it is when it's not appropriate.

D *Socrates*: "But what about ivory and gold, you wise one?" he'll say. "Don't they make things appear beautiful when they're appropriate but as ugly when they're not?" Shall we be contrary, or agree with him that he's got it right?

Hippias: We'll agree to this point, anyway, that whatever is appropriate to each thing makes each thing beautiful.

Socrates: "So which is appropriate to it," he'll say, "when someone boils that beautiful pot we were just speaking of, filled with beautiful bean soup, a golden ladle or one made of figtree wood?"

Hippias: Heracles, what a fellow you're talking about, Socrates! Won't
E you please tell me who he is?

Socrates: You wouldn't recognize his name if I told you.

Hippias: Oh, but I do recognize even now that he's some sort of ignoramus.

Socrates: He's a complete pest, Hippias, but all the same, what are we going to say? Of the pair of ladles, which one is appropriate to the soup and the pot? Or is it obvious that it's the one made of figtree wood? Because presumably it makes the soup more savory, and at the same time, my friend, by not cracking our pot, it won't spill the soup, put out the fire, and make those who are expecting to be feasted go without some thoroughly high-class gourmet fare. But
291A that golden one would do all that, so it seems to me, at least, that

we should say the one made of figtree wood is more appropriate than the golden one, unless you say otherwise.

Hippias: Well, it *is* more appropriate, Socrates; as far as I'm concerned, though, I wouldn't get into a discussion with a person who asks questions of that sort.

Socrates: Rightly so, my friend, since it wouldn't be appropriate for you to be sullied with such words, when you're so beautifully dressed and wearing beautiful shoes, and so highly regarded for wisdom among all the Greeks. But it's no big deal for *me* to get mixed up with the fellow. So teach me first and give an answer for my sake. **B**
"For if the one made of figtree wood is more appropriate than the golden one," the fellow will say, "could it be anything other than more beautiful as well, seeing as how you've agreed, Socrates, that what's appropriate is more beautiful than what's not appropriate?" Shall we do anything else but agree, Hippias, that the one made of figtree wood is more beautiful than the golden one?

Hippias: Do you want me to tell you what to say the beautiful is, Socrates, so you can spare yourself lots of arguments?

Socrates: Very much so—not, however, before you tell me which of the **C**
pair of ladles I was just speaking of I'm to answer is appropriate and more beautiful.

Hippias: If you really want to, answer him that it's the one fashioned out of figtreee wood.

Socrates: And tell me now what you were about to say just before. Because with that answer, if I say the beautiful is gold, it will be shown to me, it seems, that gold is not a bit more beautiful than wood from a figtree. So what do you say the beautiful is now?

Hippias: I'll tell you. For you seem to me to be looking for a way to **D**
answer that the beautiful is something of a sort that will never appear ugly anywhere to anyone.

Socrates: Exactly, Hippias; now you've got hold of it beautifully.

Hippias: Listen, then; for be assured, if anyone has anything he can say against *this*, you can say I don't understand anything whatsoever.

Socrates: Then say it as quickly as you can, by the gods!

Hippias: Alright then, I say that what's most beautiful for every man, always and everywhere, is to be rich, healthy, and honored by the Greeks, to reach old age, to bury his own parents in beautiful style **E**
when they die, and be given a beautiful and magnificent funeral by his own children.

Socrates: Oh, wow, Hippias, you've spoken in a wondrous and stately manner, befitting your own dignity; and by Hera, I marvel at the considerate way you seem to me to be coming to my aid to the full extent of your ability. But we're not hitting the man who's our target, and he'll laugh at us now more than ever, you can be sure.

Hippias: A worthless laugh, then, Socrates, for when he has nothing he can say in response to this and just laughs, he'll be laughing
292A at himself, and he'll be the one laughed at by the people who are present.

Socrates: Maybe that's how it is, but maybe, with that answer, he'll be liable not to just laugh at me, if my hunch is correct.

Hippias: But what else?

Socrates: Well, if he happens to have a walking stick, if I don't start running and get away from him, he'll try to land some on me good and proper.

Hippias: What are you saying? Is the fellow some sort of boss of yours? If he does that, won't he be hauled up on charges and face punish-
B ment? Or isn't your city under the rule of law? Does it just permit its citizens to beat each other up unjustly?

Socrates: By no means does it permit that.

Hippias: Well then, he'll pay the penalty for beating you up unjustly.

Socrates: No, Hippias, I don't think so; not if I'd given him that answer. It seems to me I'd be justly beaten up.

Hippias: And I think so too, Socrates, but because you yourself believe that.

Socrates: Shall I not also tell you why I myself believe I'd be justly beaten up for giving that answer? Or will you too beat me up without a trial? Will you listen to my explanation?

C *Hippias*: It would be a terrible thing, Socrates, if I wouldn't listen. But how do you explain it?

Socrates: I'll tell you in the same way I did just now, impersonating him so I won't be speaking to you in the rough and outrageous sort of words he'll use toward me. For you can be sure he'll say, "Tell me, Socrates, do you imagine it would be unjust for you to take your lumps, you or anyone else, for singing so long a dithyramb[10] so unmusically, so out of tune and so far off the question?" "How's that?" I'll say. "How's that!" he'll say; "are you incapable of
D remembering that I was asking about the beautiful itself, on account of which, when it is joined to anything—a stone, a stick, a human being, a god, any action, or anything that can be learned—that thing has the property of being beautiful? It's beauty *itself* that *I'm* asking about, man, what it *is*, and I can't shout that into you any more than if you were a stone sitting next to me, and a millstone at that, with no ears and no brain." Now wouldn't you be irritated, Hippias, if I were intimidated by that and spoke in the following
E way? "But that's what Hippias said the beautiful is, and I asked him the question exactly the way you asked me, what the beautiful is for everyone and always." So what do you say? Won't you be irritated if I speak like that?

10 A choral song originally part of the worship of Dionysus.

Hippias: I know very well, Socrates, that what I said *is* beautiful for everyone, and will be thought to be so.
Socrates: "And will go on being so?" he'll say; "for no doubt the beautiful is *always* beautiful."
Hippias: Of course.
Socrates: "And was so too?" he'll say.
Hippias: And was so too.
Socrates: "And for Achilles too?" he'll say; "did the stranger from Elis say it was beautiful for *him* to be buried after his parents, and for his grandfather Aeacus, and for all the others born to the gods, and for the gods themselves?" **293A**
Hippias: What's that? Go to bliss! These questions of this guy aren't even fit to speak.
Socrates: And what if someone else asks it? Is it not quite so unfit to say that's how things are in that case?
Hippias: Maybe not.
Socrates: "Well, then," he'll say, "maybe *you*'re the one who says it's always beautiful for everyone to be buried by one's children, and bury one's parents—or wasn't Heracles one of 'everyone,' he and all those we were just mentioning?"
Hippias: Well, I wasn't talking about the gods.
Socrates: "Not about the heroes either, it seems." **B**
Hippias: Not the ones who were children of gods, anyway.
Socrates: "Just the ones who weren't?"
Hippias: Exactly.
Socrates: "So according to your statement now, it appears that among the heroes it's a terrible and unholy and ugly thing for Tantalus and Dardanus and Zethus, but a beautiful thing for Pelops and the others born in that way."[11]
Hippias: That's how it seems to me.
Socrates: "So then the thing you just now denied seems to you to be the case," he'll say, "that for someone who has buried his parents to be buried by his children is sometimes, for some people, an ugly thing. **C** And it looks like it's still more impossible for *this* to become and be beautiful for everyone, so that the same thing has happened with this as with those previous things, the girl and the pot, and in a still more ridiculous way: it's beautiful for some and not beautiful for others. And to this day, Socrates," he'll say, "you are not yet capable of answering the question that was asked about the beautiful: what it is." He'll justly make these reproaches and others like them against me, if I answer him in that way. Most of his conversation with me is pretty much like that, Hippias, but **D** sometimes, as though he took pity on my inexperience and lack of education, he himself offers me a suggestion by asking whether it

11 Born of two human parents; the first three were sons of Zeus and a human mother.

seems to me that the beautiful is such-and-such, or about whatever else he happens to be investigating and our discussion is about.

Hippias: How do you mean that, Socrates?

Socrates: I'll tell you. He says, "Socrates you strange fellow, stop giving that sort of answers that way—they're too silly and easy to refute—
E just see whether this sort of thing seems to you to be beautiful, which we touched on in the answer a moment ago when we said gold is beautiful for things it's appropriate to, but not for things it's not appropriate to, and that everything else with which *this* is joined is beautiful. So see whether this very thing, the appropriate, and the nature of the appropriate itself turns out to be the beautiful." Now I'm in the habit of joining in such claims on every occasion, since I have nothing I can say, but does it seem to you that the appropriate is the beautiful?

Hippias: Absolutely, I'd say, Socrates.

Socrates: Let's examine it, in case we're being misled in some way.

Hippias: Oh yes, we should examine it.

Socrates: Then look: is this what we say about the appropriate, that
294A when it comes to be alongside the things it's present with, it makes each of them appear beautiful, or makes them be beautiful, or neither of these?

Hippias: To me it seems it's what makes things appear beautiful, the same way that when someone puts on clothes and shoes that are fitting, he appears more beautiful, even if he's funny looking.

Socrates: So if what's appropriate makes him appear more beautiful than he is, the appropriate would be a sort of deception about the beautiful, and that wouldn't be what we're looking for, would it,
B Hippias? What we were looking for, I presume, was that on account of which all beautiful things are beautiful, just as that by which all large things are large is an excess, because it's on account of this that everything is large; even if things don't appear large, if they're in excess, they necessarily *are* large. So about the beautiful too we're saying, that thing on account of which all things *are* beautiful, whether or not they appear to be, would be—what? For it couldn't be the appropriate, since it makes things appear more beautiful than they are, by your statement, and doesn't let them appear of the sort they are. But what makes them *be* beautiful, as
C I was just saying, whether they appear that way or not—we have to try to say what that is, since that's what we're looking for if in fact we're looking for the beautiful.

Hippias: But Socrates, what's appropriate makes things both be and appear beautiful when it's present.

Socrates: Then it's impossible for things that really *are* beautiful not to appear to be beautiful, so long as what makes them appear beautiful is present?

Hippias: Impossible.

Socrates: So are we going to agree to this, Hippias, that all customs and practices that really are beautiful always seem and appear to **D**
be beautiful to everybody, or is it just the opposite, that they go unrecognized, and that there is strife and battle over them most of all things, both between groups of people in private and cities in public?

Hippias: More so the latter, Socrates; they go unrecognized.

Socrates: But presumably they wouldn't if appearing so were added to them, and it would be added if the appropriate were the beautiful and made things not only be but also appear beautiful. And so the appropriate, if it is what makes things be beautiful, would be the the beautiful we're looking for, but wouldn't be what makes things appear beautiful. On the other hand, if the appropriate *is* what **E**
makes things appear beautiful, it could not be the beautiful we're looking for. For that does make them *be* beautiful, but the same thing could never have the power to make them both appear and be, not just beautiful but anything else whatever. So let's choose whether the appropriate seems to be what gives things the appearance of being beautiful, or makes them be that way.

Hippias: The appearance, it seems to me, Socrates.

Socrates: My, my, then, Hippias, discerning what in the world the beautiful is has gone off and gotten away from us, since the appropriate has been revealed as something other than beautiful.

Hippias: Yes, by Zeus, Socrates, and it's very unsettling to me.

Socrates: Let's not give up on it yet, though, my friend; I still have some **295A**
hope that what in the world the beautiful is will be revealed.

Hippias: Absolutely, Socrates, no doubt about it, since it's no problem to find it out. I know very well that if I could go into seclusion for a little while and examine it by myself, I could tell it to you with a precision greater than all precision.

Socrates: Oh, Hippias, don't talk so big. You see how much trouble this has gotten us into already, and I'm afraid it might get mad at us and run away even more. But I'm talking nonsense; you'll find it **B**
easily, I'm sure, when you're alone. But before the gods, find it here in front of me, or if you want to, keep on searching along with me the way we are now. If we find it, that will be the most beautiful thing, but if not, I guess I'll be content with my fortunes and you'll find it easily after you go away. And if we do find it now, don't worry; I'm not going to be a pest to you by asking what it was you found out by yourself. But fix your eyes now on what it seems to **C**
you the beautiful itself is. And what I say it is—and pay very close attention to me to make sure I'm not talking gibberish—is let *this* be the beautiful according to us: whatever is useful. And I said it because I had the following things in mind. We say that eyes are beautiful not when they seem to be of a sort that have no power to

see, but when they do have the power and are useful for seeing. Isn't that so?

Hippias: Yes.

Socrates: Then too, we speak of the whole body as being beautiful in the same way, either for running, or for wrestling, and all the
D animals too, a beautiful horse or rooster or quail, and all sorts of equipment and transportation on land and boats and battleships on the sea, and all instruments for music and the other arts, and practices and customs too if you like; we refer to just about all of these as beautiful in the same way. It's by looking at the way each of them is by nature, the way it's fashioned, the way it's set up; it's
E the useful one we say is beautiful, in the way it's useful, for the end for which it's useful and at the time when it's useful, and what's useless in all these respects we say is ugly. Does it not seem that way to you too, Hippias?

Hippias: To me, yes.

Socrates: Are we right, then, in saying now that the useful more than anything is just exactly what the beautiful is?

Hippias: Right for sure, Socrates.

Socrates: And what has the power to accomplish each thing is useful for that for which it has the power, while what lacks the power is useless?

Hippias: Exactly.

Socrates: Therefore power is beautiful and powerlessness ugly?

296A *Hippias*: Emphatically so. Other things too bear witness for us that this is how it is, but politics does especially. To be powerful in politics in one's own city is the most beautiful of all things, and to be powerless is the ugliest of all.

Socrates: Well said. And before the gods, Hippias, for that reason, isn't wisdom the most beautiful of all things and ignorance the ugliest of all?

Hippias: Why, what are you thinking, Socrates?

Socrates: Just stay calm, dear friend, because I'm afraid of what in the world we're saying now.

B *Hippias*: What are you afraid of this time, Socrates, now that your argument is coming along supremely beautifully?

Socrates: I wish it were, but examine this with me: could anyone do anything he didn't know how to do and had no power at all to do?

Hippias: By no means; how could he do what he had no power to do?

Socrates: So when people go astray, accomplish bad ends, and do things they didn't mean to do, is there any other conclusion than that if they didn't have the power to do those things, they couldn't have done them?

Hippias: Obviously not.

Socrates: But surely it's on account of power that the powerful are powerful; presumably it's not on account of a lack of power. **C**
Hippias: No indeed.
Socrates: And all those who do anything have the power to do what they do?
Hippias: Yes.
Socrates: But all human beings do a lot more bad things than good ones, starting from childhood, and go astray without meaning to.
Hippias: That is so.
Socrates: Then what about *that* power and what's useful for *that*? Are we going to say that whatever is useful for accomplishing something bad is beautiful, or far from it? **D**
Hippias: *Far*, Socrates, it seems to me.
Socrates: Therefore, Hippias, to us it looks like the powerful and the useful are *not* the beautiful.
Hippias: They are though, Socrates, if they're powerful for good and useful for that sort of thing.
Socrates: Well then, the former claim is gone, that what's powerful and useful is good simply. But then Hippias, was this what our soul wanted to say, that what's useful and powerful for doing something good is the beautiful? **E**
Hippias: It seems that way to me.
Socrates: But surely that's the beneficial, isn't it?
Hippias: Exactly.
Socrates: So it's in that way that beautiful bodies and beautiful customs and wisdom and all the things we were just speaking of are beautiful, because they're beneficial.
Hippias: Obviously.
Socrates: Therefore it looks like, as far as we're concerned, the beneficial is the beautiful, Hippias.
Hippias: Absolutely, I'd say, Socrates.
Socrates: But the beneficial is what produces good.
Hippias: It is indeed.
Socrates: But what produces something is nothing other than its cause, isn't that so?
Hippias: Just so.
Socrates: Therefore the beautiful is the cause of the good. **297A**
Hippias: It is.
Socrates: But surely the cause, and that of which the cause is a cause, are different, since presumably the cause couldn't be the cause of the cause. Look at it this way: didn't the cause come to sight as something productive?
Hippias: Exactly.
Socrates: And what's produced by something productive is nothing other than the thing that comes into being; it's not the productive thing, is it?

Hippias: That's so.

Socrates: So what comes into being is one thing, and what produces it is something else?

Hippias: Yes.

B *Socrates*: Therefore the cause is not the cause *of* the cause, but of the thing brought into being by it.

Hippias: Exactly.

Socrates: Therefore, if the beautiful is the cause of the good, the good would be brought into being by the beautiful, and it looks like that's the reason we're eager for intelligence and all the other beautiful things, because their product and offspring is something worth being eager for, namely the good; and based on what we're finding, the beautiful is liable to have the look of a sort of father of the good.

Hippias: Very much so, and that's beautifully put, Socrates.

Socrates: And am I putting this beautifully too, the the father is not

C the son and the son is not the father?

Hippias: Quite beautifully.

Socrates: And the cause is not the thing that comes into being, and the thing that comes into being is not the cause.

Hippias: You're telling the truth.

Socrates: By Zeus, then, most excellent fellow, the beautiful is not the good either, and the good is not the beautiful. Or does that seem possible to you, based on what's been said?

Hippias: No, by Zeus, it doesn't appear that way to me.

Socrates: Well, does that satisfy us, and should we be willing to say that what's beautiful is not good and what's good is not beautiful?

Hippias: No, by Zeus, it doesn't satisfy me at all!

D *Socrates*: Yes, by Zeus, Hippias; to me it's the least satisfying of all the statements we've made.

Hippias: It looks that way.

Socrates: Therefore, it's likely that it's not the way it appeared to us just now, that the most beautiful of our statements was that what's beneficial, useful, and powerful to produce something good is beautiful, but, if possible, it's even more ridiculous than those first statements of ours, in which we were supposing that the beautiful was a girl and each one of the things we mentioned before.

Hippias: It looks like it is.

Socrates: And I don't have any other way to turn, Hippias; I'm stumped. Do you have anything to say?

E *Hippias*: Not at the moment, but as I was saying just now, I know very well I'll find it when I've examined it.

Socrates: But I seem to be so gripped by a desire to know that I'm not going to be able to wait around for you. And now I believe I've just come up with a way out. Look, if we were to claim that this is the beautiful, whatever makes us feel enjoyment, not at every

sort of pleasure, but whatever does so through hearing and sight, how would we do in our struggle then? No doubt beautiful human **298A**
beings, at least, Hippias, and all decorations and paintings and statuary that are beautiful delight us when we see them, and beautiful sounds and all sorts of music and speeches and stories have that same effect, so that if we were to answer that audacious fellow, "You high-class guy, the beautiful is what's pleasing through hearing and sight," don't you think we'd put a stop to his audacity?

Hippias: To me at any rate, Socrates, it now seems that what the beautiful is has been well stated. **B**

Socrates: But what about beautiful practices and customs, Hippias? Are we going to claim they're beautiful because they're pleasing through hearing or sight, or that they have some other form?

Hippias: Maybe these things would slip past the fellow unnoticed, Socrates.

Socrates: By the dog, Hippias, not past the person to whom I'd be most ashamed of talking nonsense, and of pretending to be saying something when I was saying nothing.

Hippias: Who's that?

Socrates: Sophroniscus' son,[12] who would no more permit me to get **C**
off easy by saying these things when they were unexamined than to say I know things I don't know.

Hippias: Well, now that you mention it, this business about customs seems to me as well as to him to be a different thing.

Socrates: Hold still, Hippias. For in fact, we're liable to be assuming we're onto some other way out when we've landed in the exact same impasse about the beautiful that we were in just now.

Hippias: How do you mean that, Socrates?

Socrates: I'll tell you what's becoming evident to me, if there's anything in what I'm saying. For it might possibly be made evident that **D**
these things about customs and practices don't turn up outside the perception that reaches us through hearing and sight; but let's just stick to this statement, that what's pleasing through them is beautiful, and not drag the business about customs into the middle of it. But if this person I'm speaking of, or anyone else whatever, were to ask us, "Hippias and Socrates, what about this? Have you separated out of the pleasant what's pleasant in this way that you're saying is beautiful, and as for what's pleasant to the other senses, **E**
from food and drink and the things involved in sex, and all the other things of that sort, you deny that it's beautiful? Or are you claiming it's not even pleasant, and there are no pleasures at all in such things, or in anything other than seeing and hearing?" What are we going to say, Hippias?

12 That is, Socrates himself. On his oath in his preceding speech, see the note on 287E.

Hippias: No doubt about it, Socrates, we're absolutely going to say there are very great pleasures in the other things too.

Socrates: "Then why, if they're pleasures no less than those other things," he'll say, "do you rob them of that name and cheat them
299A out of being beautiful?" We'll say, "Because there's no one whatever who wouldn't laugh at us if we said eating was a *beautiful* thing rather than a pleasant one, or getting a whiff of something pleasing was beautiful rather than pleasant; and as for the things involved in sex, no doubt everyone would contend with us that, while it is most pleasant, one ought to do it, if he does it at all, so that no one sees, since it's the ugliest thing to be seen at." And when we say that, Hippias, probably he'd say, "I understand, and I've understood all along that you were ashamed to claim these pleasures were beautiful, because they don't seem that way to
B human beings. But I wasn't asking you *that*, what seems to most people to be beautiful, but what *is* beautiful." So I imagine we'll say the very thing we set down as our hypothesis: "We claim that part of the pleasant that comes by sight and hearing is beautiful." Do you have anything else to handle the argument with, Hippias, or any other thing we can say?"

Hippias: In view of what's been said, Socrates, it's a necessity to say no other thing than that.

Socrates: He'll say, "You fellows are speaking beautifully; and so if
C what's pleasant through sight and hearing is beautiful, then it's clear that whichever pleasant things *don't* happen to be that sort would not be beautiful?" Are we going to agree?

Hippias: Yes.

Socrates: He'll say, "And is what's pleasant through sight pleasant through sight *and* hearing, or what's pleasant through hearing pleasant through hearing and sight?" We'll say, "That which is through one or the other would by no means be through both—since that's what you seem to us to be saying; we were saying instead that each of these pleasant things, just by itself, and both together, would be beautiful." Isn't that the way we'll answer?"

D *Hippias*: Certainly.

Socrates: "Well then," he'll say, "is any pleasant thing whatsoever different from any other pleasant thing whatsoever in this respect: by being pleasant? I'm not asking whether any pleasure is greater or smaller or more or less intense, but whether any of them is different in this very respect, by one of the pleasures' being a pleasure and the other's not being a pleasure." "It doesn't seem so to us, at any rate." Or does it?

Hippias: It sure doesn't seem that way.

Socrates: "Then isn't it for some other reason than the fact that they're pleasures," he'll say, "that you fellows picked out these pleasures
E from among the rest of the pleasures, seeing something in the pair

of them of such a sort that they have some difference from the rest, which you're looking off toward when you claim that they're beautiful? For it's presumably not for *that* reason that the pleasure through sight is beautiful, the fact that it's through sight, for if that were the cause of its being beautiful, then the other one, the one through hearing, wouldn't be beautiful; *it*'s certainly not a pleasure through sight." Shall we say, "You're telling the truth?"

Hippias: That's what we'll say.

Socrates: "Nor again does the pleasure through hearing happen to be beautiful for the reason that it's through hearing. For then, in turn, the pleasure through sight wouldn't be beautiful; *it*'s certainly not a pleasure through hearing." Shall we say, Hippias, that the man who says that is telling the truth? **300A**

Hippias: It's true.

Socrates: "But yet *both* of them are beautiful, as you fellows are saying." We are saying that?

Hippias: We're saying it.

Socrates: "Therefore they have something that's the same that makes them be beautiful, that common something that's attached to them both in common and to each in particular. For presumably there's no other way that both together and each one would be beautiful." Answer me as you would him. **B**

Hippias: I answer that it seems to me to be the way you say.

Socrates: Therefore if these two pleasures both together have some attribute, but each one does not have it, it would not be on account of that attribute that they were beautiful.

Hippias: And how could that be, Socrates, when neither one of them has some attribute, any attribute whatever that there is, that this attribute that neither of them has could be an attribute of them both?

Socrates: It doesn't seem to you it could? **C**

Hippias: If it did, I'd have to have a vast inexperience of the nature of these things and of the language of the statements now being made.

Socrates: Pleasantly put, Hippias; still, I seem possibly to be seeing something that's the way you say it's impossible for anything to be, though maybe I'm not seeing anything.

Hippias: There's no *possibly* about it, Socrates; you're just quite certainly seeing what's not there.

Socrates: In fact, a lot of things like that are showing up in view of my soul, but I'm suspicious of them because they're not apparent to you, a man who's made the most cash out of wisdom of anyone nowadays, but to me, who's never made any. And so vividly do so many instances appear that I'm worried, my friend, that you might be playing with me, and deliberately deceiving me. **D**

Hippias: No one, Socrates, will know more beautifully than you whether I'm playing or not, if you'll make an effort to describe these things that are showing up to you, since you will obviously be talking nonsense. For you will never find an attribute that neither you nor I have that's an attribute of both of us.

E *Socrates*: How do you mean, Hippias? Maybe you're saying something that I don't understand, but hear me out as I say more clearly what *I* mean. Because it's apparent to me that it's possible for something to be an attribute of us both which is no attribute of mine, something that I'm not and you're not either. And there are other things as well that neither one of us is, which we both[13] have the attribute of being.

Hippias: You seem to be giving still more bizarre answers this time than you were a little while ago, Socrates. Look here: if we're both just, wouldn't each of us be just too, or if we're each unjust, wouldn't

301A both of us be unjust too, or if we're healthy, wouldn't each of us be healthy too? Or if each of us were sick in some way or wounded or hit or had any other attribute at all, wouldn't we both have that attribute too? Furthermore, if both of us should happen to be made of gold or silver or ivory, or, if you prefer, if we were upper class or wise or honored, or old or young or anything you please that's found in human beings, wouldn't it be a great necessity for each of us to be that too?

B *Socrates*: Absolutely, no doubt about it.

Hippias: But you, Socrates, don't look at the wholes of things, and the people you habitually have conversations with don't either; you take the beautiful, and each thing there is, off to one side and poke at it, after cutting them up in words. That's why it escapes your notice that it's the nature of such great bodies of being to be unbroken. And now this has escaped your notice to such an extent that you imagine there's some attribute or state of being that applies

C to both of two things together, but not to each of them, or else to each of them but not to both. Such an irrational and undiscerning and simple-minded and thoughtless a state you folks have gotten yourselves into.

Socrates: That's how things are with us, Hippias, not the way one wishes, as the proverb human beings are always repeating says, but the way that's in one's power. But you always help us out with your rebukes. Because even now, before being rebuked about these things by you, what a simple-minded state we were in—shall I give you still more of a display of it by saying what we were thinking

D about them, or shall I not speak?

13 In English, careful speakers sometimes restrict the meaning of the word "both" to exclude the meaning "the two." The meaning "both together" is a more emphatic possibility in the Greek word *amphoteros*. Socrates exploits the ambiguity in the argument that follows.

Hippias: You'll be telling it to someone who knows, since I know the state *every* type of people involved in arguments is in. Nevertheless, if it's more pleasing to you, speak on.

Socrates: It is definitely more pleasing, because, most excellent fellow, we were such incompetent fellows that, before you said these things, we held the opinion about you and me that each of us is one, but that it didn't follow that we were both what each of us was, since we're not one but two; that's how simple-minded we were. But now we've already been taught otherwise by you, that **E**
if we're *both* two, then necessarily *each* of us is two, and if each is one, then necessarily both together are one. For, according to the theory of the unbrokenness of being propounded by Hippias, it's not possible for it to be otherwise, but whatever both are, that each is too, and what each is, both are. So now here I sit, convinced by you. First, though, Hippias, remind me: are you and I one, or are you two and I'm two?

Hippias: What do you mean, Socrates?

Socrates: Exactly what I say, because I'm afraid to speak plainly to you, since you're rough on me whenever you seem to yourself to be **302A**
saying something. Nevertheless, tell me one more thing: isn't it the case that each of us is one and has this attribute of being one?

Hippias: Of course.

Socrates: Then each of us, if one, would be an odd number. Or don't you consider one an odd number?

Hippias: *I* do.

Socrates: Then both of us, being two, are an odd number?

Hippias: That could not be, Socrates.

Socrates: But we're both an even number, right?

Hippias: Of course.

Socrates: But then, because we're both an even number, does that mean each of us is also an even number? **B**

Hippias: No indeed.

Socrates: Therefore it's not a *complete* necessity, as you were just saying it was, that whatever both are, each is too, and whatever each is, both are too.

Hippias: Not *that* sort of things; just the sort I was talking about before.

Socrates: That's good enough, Hippias; they have to be accepted too, since it appears that some things are that way while others are not. Because, if you remember where this discussion got started, I was saying that the pleasure through sight and hearing was beautiful *not* on account of something that happened to be an attribute of **C**
each of them but not both, or of both of them but not each, but on account of something applying to both *and* each, because you went along with the fact that both and each *are* beautiful. So for that reason I assumed that, if both are beautiful, they had to *be* beauti-

ful on account of that way of being that goes along with both, and not on account of anything that's lacking in one or the other; and I still assume that now. But tell me, as though from the beginning:

D if the pleasure through sight and the pleasure through hearing are both and each beautiful, isn't it also the case that what *makes* them beautiful goes along with both and each of them?

Hippias: Of course.

Socrates: Well, would they be beautiful on account of the fact that they're each and both pleasures? Or on that account would all the other pleasures be no less beautiful than they are? For it was obvious, if you recall, that they were no less pleasures.

Hippias: I do recall.

E *Socrates*: But it was because *these* pleasure are through sight and hearing; that's the reason they were said to be beautiful.

Hippias: It was in fact put that way.

Socrates: Then see if what I say is true, for the way I remember it, what's pleasant in this way and not in every way was said to be beautiful, just what's pleasant through sight and hearing.

Hippias: True.

Socrates: And this attribute goes along with both but not with each? For presumably, as was said before, *each* of them is not through both; *both* are through both, but not each. Is that so?

Hippias: It is.

Socrates: Therefore, something that does not go along with each is not the reason each of them is beautiful (for "both" doesn't go along with each), so it's permissible on our hypothesis to say they're *both*

303A beautiful, but not permissible to say *each* is. Or else how do we say it? Isn't that a necessity?

Hippias: So it appears.

Socrates: We're going to claim, then, that both are beautiful but each is not?

Hippias: What's to prevent us?

Socrates: This seems to me to prevent us, dear friend: we had, presumably, some attributes, all those that *you* went through, that are attached to particular things in such a way that if they're attached to both, they're also attached to each, and if to each, also to both. Isn't that right?

Hippias: Yes.

Socrates: But those, on the other hand, that *I* went through are not like that, and among them was precisely the example of "each and both" itself. Isn't that how it is?

Hippias: It is.

B *Socrates*: Of which sort, then, Hippias, does the beautiful seem to you to be? Is it among those you were speaking of? If I'm strong and you are too, then we both are, and if I'm just and you are too, then we both are, and if we both are, each is too, so in the same way, if

I'm beautiful and you are too, then are we both beautiful, and if both, also each? Or does nothing prevent this from being just like the case in which certain things are both even while possibly each is odd, or else each is irrational while both together are possibly rational and possibly irrational,[14] and tens of thousands of other cases like that which I said showed up to me? In which group do you put the beautiful? Or do you see it the same way that's perfectly plain to me? Because it would seem to me to be a big irrationality for us both to be beautiful and each not, or each and not both, or anything else whatever of that sort. Do you choose that way, as I do, or the other way? **C**

Hippias: That's the way I choose, Socrates.

Socrates: And you do well to do so, Hippias, so that we can be spared a longer investigation. For if the beautiful is one of these things, then what's pleasant through sight and hearing would no longer be beautiful. For the attribute "through sight and hearing" makes both beautiful, but not each, and that would be impossible, Hippias, as you and I agree. **D**

Hippias: We do agree.

Socrates: Therefore it's impossible for what's pleasant through sight and hearing to be the beautiful, since by becoming the beautiful it presents an impossibility.

Hippias: That's how it is.

Socrates: "So since you fellows missed this completely," he'll say, "tell me again from the beginning: what do you claim this *beautiful* is that applies to both these pleasures, on account of which you honored them above the rest by naming them beautiful?" Now it seems necessary to me, Hippias, to say that both and each of these are the most innocent among the pleasures, and the best. Or do you have something else to say that differentiates them from the rest? **E**

Hippias: Not at all, for they really are the best.

Socrates: "So are you fellows saying this is what the beautiful is," he'll say: "beneficial pleaure?" I'll say, "It looks like we are." And you?

Hippias: I will too.

Socrates: "And the beneficial," he'll say, "is what's productive of good, but it was shown just now that what's productive and what's produced are different, and your argument has come back to your earlier account, hasn't it? For the good couldn't be the beautiful or the beautiful the good if one of them is different from the other." If we're sensible, we'll say, "Truer words were never spoken," since **304A**

14 In geometry, "irrational" means incommensurable with a unit magnitude. The diagonal of the square with a side of unit length was found by the Pythagoreans to be irrational in length, and two of them end-to-end are both together irrational. By contrast, the construction of the type of line called apotome, known to Theaetetus and found in Euclid's *Elements* X, 73, cuts a rational line into two parts both irrational in length.

it's surely not legitimate to refuse to go along with someone who speaks rightly.

Hippias: But really, Socrates, what do you think all this put together amounts to? I tell you, it's just scraps and shreds of arguments, the very thing I was just saying, taken apart into little bits, but what's beautiful and worth a great deal is a different thing: to be able, when one has delivered a discourse well and beautifully in a law-
B court or council chamber or to any other official body to which the discourse is addressed, and persuaded it, to go away carrying off not the smallest but the greatest of prizes, as salvation for oneself, one's property and one's friends. These are the things one should hold on to, and say goodbye to these petty arguments, so one won't be thought a complete idiot for getting mixed up in nonsensical garbage, the way one is now.

Socrates: Hippias, dear friend, you are a blessed one, because you know what a human being ought to pursue, and you have pursued
C it well enough, as you say. But it looks like some supernatural fortune holds me back—I who am always wandering around and getting to an impasse, and if I reveal my own dilemma to you wise men, I get verbal mud slung back at me by you fellows whenever I display it. You folks say exactly what you're saying now about me, that I'm concerned about silly and petty things that are worth nothing. But then when I'm won over by you folks and I say what you do, that by far the best thing is to be able to deliver a speech
D well and beautifully and be a success in a lawcourt or in any other gathering, I hear myself called every bad name by some other folks around here, and especially by that fellow who's always refuting me—he happens to be my closest relative, and lives in the same house.[15] So whenever I go home to my own place, and *he* hears me saying those things, he asks me whether I'm not ashamed to have the nerve to be discussing beautiful practices when I've so obviously been humiliated by refutation about the beautiful that I don't even know what in the world this beautiful itself is. "So how will
E *you* know," he'll say, "who's delivered a speech beautifully or not, or performed any other action whatever beautifully, when you're ignorant about what's beautiful? And when you're in such a state, do you imagine you're any better off being alive rather than dead?" So I end up, as I say, hearing myself badly spoken of and reviled by you folks, and badly spoken of by that fellow too. But maybe it's necessary to endure all that, since it wouldn't be anything surprising if I were benefited by it. So it seems to me, Hippias, that I've been benefited by associating with *both* of you, for it seems to me that I know what the proverb means, the one that says "Beautiful things are trouble."

15 See 298B-C and note.

CRATYLUS

Outline of the dialogue

383A-384E Hermogenes invites Socrates to join a conversation he has been having with Cratylus about names. Cratylus has claimed that everything has a name that is naturally right for it, while Hermogenes doubts that names can have any rightness other than agreement with convention.

385A-386E Socrates begins to question Hermogenes, and finds he does not agree with the sophist Protagoras, that things are however they seem to each person, or with the sophist Euthydemus that all attributes equally well belong to all things. Hermogenes and Socrates agree that there must be some stability by nature in the things that are spoken about.

386E-390E Socrates compares speaking to other actions, which must be performed artfully if they are to accomplish any intended purpose. Hermogenes agrees that names must be crafted in such a way as to build the forms of things into the material of letters and syllables.

391A-396D To examine the rightness of particular names, Socrates turns to Homer, who gives many instances of proper names given differently by gods and humans or by different groups of humans. The names that make evident the origins or character of those named appear to be the right ones, even though there is room for great variation in the letters and syllables that convey them.

396D-400D Hermogenes comments that the fluency and assurance with which Socrates is speaking seem to come from divine inspiration. Socrates agrees and blames it on Euthyphro, with whom he spent the early morning; he warns that this inspiration is not to be trusted, but suggests they continue to see what it will bring, and turns from proper names of human beings to the names of such kinds of beings as gods, divinities, heroes, and humans. Hermogenes asks about the names soul and body, and Socrates explains them as well.

400D-408D At Hermogenes' request, Socrates explains the names of the gods, with the preliminary disclaimer that the only thing such names make evident is human opinion. When Socrates begs to be excused from any further discussion of the gods, Hermogenes insists on hearing about one more of them, Hermes, for whom he himself is named. Socrates obliges, and claims the names of Hermes and his son Pan reveal something of the nature of speech itself.

408D-410E Hermogenes suggests that there would be no risk of impiety in discussing other things sometimes regarded as deities, such as the sun and moon or the earth and the air, and Socrates agrees to gratify him, though he attributes a foreign origin to some of those names.

411A-415A Hermogenes asks about the names of the virtues of intellect and character. Socrates begins by claiming to notice that they all involve references to motion and flux. His smoothly flowing explanations carry him away to words related to male and female and growth. His explanation of art strikes Hermogenes as lacking the smoothness of the others, and Socrates protests that the passage of time has distorted and buried many names impenetrably. He urges Hermogenes to be on the lookout for anything too farfetched, but not to be too strict about it.

415A-419B Socrates reaches the pinnacle of the things he has been claiming by displaying the consistent principle underlying various words referring to goodness and badness, and he brings an apparent exception into line with the rest by appealing to a change of spelling over the course of time.

419B-420E At Hermogenes' request, Socrates moves on to explain names related to pleasure, pain, and desire, and then to opinion, and he himself volunteers explanations of names for what is necessary or voluntary.

421A-C Hermogenes asks about the names for the greatest and most beautiful things, the true and the false, being, and names themselves, and Socrates obliges so readily and briefly that Hermogenes presses him to account for the names on which those names depend.

421C-427D Socrates now questions Hermogenes about how the original names could carry meaning. It seems to them to require that the sounds of the separate letters are somehow imitative of the way things are, and Socrates makes an effort to find examples. His accounts seem feeble and laughable even to himself, and he points out that their understanding of the derivative names is worthless if they do not understand the original ones.

427D-432D Cratylus is finally drawn into the discussion. He claims that every name truthfully reveals some nature, and that none succeeds better or worse at doing so. Socrates argues that Cratylus is treating names as if they were numbers, which cease to be what they are when anything is added or taken away, and assuming images can be perfect matches for their originals.

432D-end Cratylus argues that even if names could be faulty, the names we have all truthfully teach the natures of things, and says the surest proof of this is the fact that they are all in harmony in teaching that everything is in flux. Socrates cites several names that seem to indicate the opposite, and Cratylus says it is sufficient that the majority of names are in agreement. Their dispute finally centers upon whether we can learn anything about the nature of things that does not depend on a trust in names. Socrates claims that the testimony of names about whether all things are in flux is contradictory and needs examination; Cratylus claims he has examined it sufficiently already.

383A *Hermogenes*: Do you want us to make our speech a common endeavor with Socrates here?

Cratylus: If it seems like a good idea to you.

Hermogenes: Socrates, Cratylus here says that for each of the things there are, there's a name of such a nature as to be naturally right, and this name is not whatever a particular group of people call it when they've agreed to call it that, applying a piece of their
B own speech to it, but there's a certain natural rightness of names that's the same for all people, Greeks and barbarians alike. So I ask him if Cratylus is truly his name and he agrees it is. "And what is Socrates' name?" I said. He said, "Socrates." "And for all other human beings too, the very name we call each one, is that the name of each?" "Well, your name is not Hermogenes,[1] at any

1 "Of the race of Hermes." Since Hermes was, among other things, the god of commerce, Socrates' conjecture in the next speech probably explains what Cratylus meant, though another way of interpreting Hermes' nature leads Hermogenes to disown his name at 408B below.

rate," he said, "even if all human beings call you that." And despite my asking and being eager to know what in the world he means, **384A** he doesn't make anything clear and adopts an ironic tone toward me, acting like someone who knows about it, as though he himself was thinking something within himself which, if he felt like stating it clearly, would make me agree too and say the very things he himself was saying. So if you have any way to make sense of Cratylus's oracular utterance, I'd be pleased to hear it. Or rather, I'd be even more pleased to find out how things seem to you yourself about rightness of names, if you're willing.

Socrates: Hermogenes, son of Hipponicus, the ancient proverb that "beautiful things are trouble" is the way it is with learning them. **B** And what has to do with names in particular happens to be no small thing to learn. Now if I had ever heard the fifty-buck exposition given by Prodicus, which, as he says, makes the one who hears it educated on this subject, nothing would stand in the way of your knowing the truth about rightness of names immediately; as it is, though, I haven't heard it—just the one-buck version. So **C** I don't know what in the world the truth is about such matters. I am, however, ready to inquire together with you and Cratylus in common. As for the fact that he claims Hermogenes is not truly your name, I suspect he's making a joke, since he probably thinks you're aiming at making money but always failing. But as I was just saying, it's hard to know such things, and one ought to make common cause to see whether it's the way you say or the way Cratylus says.

Hermogenes: Well I've certainly had conversations often, with this fellow and lots of other people too, and I'm not able to be persuaded that there's any other rightness for a name than convention and **D** agreement. For it seems to me that whatever name anyone gives anything is the right one; and if one then changes it to something else, and no longer calls it that other name, the later one is no less right than the earlier one. It's the same way as we change the names of our servants, for no name is of such a nature as to belong to any particular thing by nature, but only by a custom and habit of those who set it down and call it that. But if it's some other way, **E** I'm ready to listen and to learn, not only from Cratylus but also from anyone else whatever.

Socrates: What you say may quite possibly be so, Hermogenes, but **385A** let's examine it. You're claiming that whatever anyone calls each thing is its name?

Hermogenes: It seems so to me.

Socrates: Whether it's a private person or a city that calls it that?

Hermogenes: I'd say so.

Socrates: Well, then, what if I give a name to any of the things there are, say what we now call a human being, and I call this a horse,

and what we now call a horse I call a human being? Will the name of the same thing be human being in public and horse in private? Or in the other case human being in private and horse in public? Is that how you mean it?

B *Hermogenes*: It seems that way to me.

Socrates: Come then, tell me this: do you speak of something as saying a true or a false thing?

Hermogenes: I sure do.

Socrates: So there would be true speech and false speech?

Hermogenes: Yes indeed.

Socrates: And isn't that speech which states things the way they are true and that which states them the way they are not false?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: Therefore in speech it's possible to say things that are and also things that are not?

Hermogenes: Certainly.

C *Socrates*: And with speech that's true, is it true as a whole when its parts are not true?

Hermogenes: No, when the parts are too.

Socrates: When the big parts are true but the small ones aren't, or when all of them are?

Hermogenes: All of them, I'd think.

Socrates: And is there anything you'd say is a smaller part of speech than a name?

Hermogenes: No, that's the smallest.

Socrates: Therefore that too is spoken within the true speech?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: And is true, as you're claiming.

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: And isn't a part of false speech false?

Hermogenes: I'd say so.

Socrates: Therefore it's possible to say a false or a true name, if one can also say a false or a true speech?

D *Hermogenes*: How could it be otherwise?

Socrates: Now then, whatever each person says the name of anything is, that is its name for that particular person?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: And however many names anyone says belong to each thing, that's how many there will be at the time when he says so?

Hermogenes: Well, Socrates, I don't know any other rightness than that for a name, for there to be one name which I give it for me to

E call each thing, and another for you, which you give it. So too, I see names applied to the same things by particular cities on their own, Greeks apart from other Greeks as well as Greeks from barbarians.

Socrates: Well come then, Hermogenes, and let's see whether it also appears to you to be that way with the *things*, that the being of them is a private matter for each person, just as Protagoras used to say, claiming that the "measure of all things" is a human being—so that whatever way the things appear to me is the way they are for me and whatever way they appear to you is the way they are for you. Or does it seem to you that they themselves have some stability of being of their own? 386A

Hermogenes: There have been times, Socrates, when I've been so stumped that I was carried away to the point of the very things Protagoras says, though that certainly doesn't seem to me to be the way things are at all.

Socrates: What about this? Were you ever carried away to this point, that it didn't seem to you at all that there was any worthless human being? B

Hermogenes: By Zeus, no, but I *have* often had it happen that it seemed to me certain human beings are entirely worthless, and quite a throng of them.

Socrates: What? Didn't any ever seem to you to be entirely decent?

Hermogenes: Very few.

Socrates: But they did seem that way?

Hermogenes: To me, yes.

Socrates: And how do you figure that? Isn't it like this: those who are entirely decent are entirely sensible, and those who are entirely worthless are entirely senseless?

Hermogenes: It seems that way to me, yes. C

Socrates: Then if Protagoras was speaking truly, and the truth of it is this, that whatever way things seem to each person is also the way they are, is it possible for some of us to be sensible and others senseless?

Hermogenes: Certainly not.

Socrates: And I imagine this too seems completely the case to you, that if there is good sense and senselessness, it's completely impossible for Protagoras to be speaking truly, since presumably one person could be no more sensible than another if whatever seems to each one to be the case is going to be true for each one. D

Hermogenes: That is so.

Socrates: But surely, I imagine, it doesn't seem to you to be the way it is according to Euthydemus, that all attributes alike belong to all things at the same time always, since in that case there couldn't even be decent and worthless people, if virtue and vice alike belonged to everyone all the time.

Hermogenes: You're speaking truly.

Socrates: So if it's neither the case that all attributes belong alike to all things at the same time always, nor that each thing is a private matter for each person, it's clear that things themselves have E

something stable of their own about them that's not relative to us or dependent on us, dragged up and down by our imagining, something that they have in virtue of themselves, in relation to their own being, holding on in the very way they are by nature.

Hermogenes: It seems that way to me, Socrates.

Socrates: Well, could things themselves be that way by nature while their actions were not the same way? Aren't they too, the actions, one particular form of beings?

Hermogenes: They are, very much so.

387A *Socrates*: Therefore actions too are performed in accord with their own nature, not in accord with our opinion. For instance, if we took it upon ourselves to cut something, any of the things there are, is it appropriate for each thing to be cut by us in whatever way we want and with whatever we want? Or, if we want to cut each thing in accord with the nature of cutting and being cut, and with something of such a nature to cut it, will we cut it and get ourselves something by it and accomplish that the right way, while if we do it contrary to nature we'll go astray and accomplish nothing?

B *Hermogenes*: That's how it seems to me.

Socrates: So if we took it upon ourselves to burn something, we should burn it not in accord with any and every opinion, but with the right one, and that's the one by which each thing is of such a nature as to be burned and to burn, by something of such a nature as to burn it?

Hermogenes: That's it.

Socrates: And it's the same way with the rest of the actions?

Hermogenes: Entirely so.

Socrates: Well then, isn't speaking also one of the actions?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: Then is it appropriate for speaking to be done in whatever

C way seems good to anyone? Will one speak rightly that way or if he does so in the way it's natural to say the things and for them to be said, by the means of such a nature as to say them? If he speaks in that way and by that means, will he achieve something and say something, whereas if he doesn't, he'll go astray and achieve nothing?

Hermogenes: It seems to me to be the way you say it is.

Socrates: And naming is part of speaking? For presumably it's in distinguishing things by names that people say the things they say.

Hermogenes: Entirely so.

Socrates: And so naming is an action too, if speaking is also an action that involves things?

Hermogenes: Yes.

D *Socrates*: And actions revealed themselves to us as not being relative to us, but as having a certain particular nature of their own?

Hermogenes: That's so.

Socrates: Then is it appropriate too for the naming to be done in the way it's natural to name the things and for them to be named, and by something of such a nature as to name them, rather than in whatever way we want to, if this is going to be in agreement at all with the earlier cases? And would we achieve something and name something in that way and not otherwise?
Hermogenes: It appears so to me.
Socrates: Well, then, we said that what one needs to cut, one needs to cut with something?
Hermogenes: Yes.
Socrates: And what one needs to ply the shuttle upon, one needs to ply the shuttle upon with something? And what one needs to pierce, one needs to pierce with something? **E**
Hermogenes: Certainly.
Socrates: And what one needs to name, one needs to name with something?
Hermogenes: That's so. **388A**
Socrates: And what is that with which one needs to drill a hole?
Hermogenes: An auger.
Socrates: And that with which one needs to ply the shuttle?[2]
Hermogenes: A shuttle.
Socrates: And that with which one needs to name something?
Hermogenes: A name.
Socrates: Well said. Therefore a name is also a certain kind of tool.
Hermogenes: Quite so.
Socrates: And if I were to ask, "What kind of tool is a shuttle?" Isn't it that which we ply upon the threads?
Hermogenes: Yes.
Socrates: And what are we doing when we ply the shuttle? Aren't we disentangling the intermingled threads of the warp and woof? **B**
Hermogenes: Yes.
Socrates: And you'll be able to say the same sort of thing about an auger and the other tools?
Hermogenes: Certainly.
Socrates: So you can say the same sort of thing about a name too? Since the name is a tool, what are we doing when we're naming?
Hermogenes: I can't say.
Socrates: Aren't we teaching something to one another and disentangling things by their capacities?

2 The verb here translated "to ply the shuttle" is *kerkizein*, made from *kerkis*, the noun for a shuttle. All other English translations render this verb as "weave," but Socrates is keeping it distinct from the more general word *huphainein*. Weaving (*huphantikê*) is the word used below for the whole process of making cloth. In Greek as in English *huphainein* would normally imply combining (as in Plato's *Statesman*, 281A); by contrast, Socrates emphasizes the use of the *kerkis* to comb threads out of the raw material and then hold them separate even as it plaits them together on the loom. The example seems to suggest that naming too should be looked at as part of a larger process.

Hermogenes: Exactly.
Socrates: Therefore a name is a certain kind of tool meant for teaching
C and for the disentangling of being, the same way a shuttle is for a weaver's threads.
Hermogenes: Yes.
Socrates: And the shuttle is for weaving?
Hermogenes: What else?
Socrates: Therefore it's someone who can weave who'll use a shuttle in a beautiful way, and the beautiful way is the way that belongs to weaving; and it's someone who can teach who'll use a name in a beautiful way, and the beautiful way is the way that belongs to teaching.
Hermogenes: Yes.
Socrates: And whose work will the weaver be using beautifully when he uses the shuttle?
Hermogenes: That of the carpenter.
Socrates: And is everyone a carpenter, or someone who has the art?[3]
Hermogenes: Someone with the art.
D *Socrates*: And whose work will the hole-driller be using beautifully when he uses the auger?
Hermogenes: That of the blacksmith.
Socrates: Well, is everyone a blacksmith, or someone who has the art?
Hermogenes: Someone with the art.
Socrates: Okay. And whose work will someone who can teach be using when he uses a name?
Hermogenes: I can't say that, either.
Socrates: Can't you at least say this, who gives us the names that we use?
Hermogenes: No, I can't.
Socrates: Doesn't it seem to you that custom is what gives them?
Hermogenes: It looks that way.
E *Socrates*: Therefore someone who can teach will be using the work of a lawgiver[4] when he uses a word?
Hermogenes: It seems that way to me.
Socrates: And does it seem to you that every man is a lawgiver, or someone who has the art?
Hermogenes: Someone with the art.
Socrates: Therefore, Hermogenes, giving names doesn't belong to
389A every man, but to a certain craftsman of names, and it looks like

3 Art (*technê*) is the capacity for artful action or production, the ability to achieve one's end reliably in any specific kind of doing or making. See also the note to *Protagoras* 312B.

4 Socrates has in mind a lawgiver like Lycurgus, who established a whole way of life for Sparta and whose laws were unwritten, rather than one like Solon who wrote a detailed constitution for Athens. The one word *nomos* meant both law and custom.

that person is the lawgiver, the rarest of craftsmen who come along among humankind.

Hermogenes: It looks that way.

Socrates: Come on then and see what the lawgiver is looking to when he gives names, and look back at it on the basis of the previous points. To what is the carpenter looking when he makes a shuttle? Isn't it toward some sort of thing which would be of such a nature as to comb on the loom?

Hermogenes: Certainly.

Socrates: And what if the shuttle gets broken by him while he's making it? Will he make another one looking back at the broken one, or looking toward that very form[5] in view of which he made the one he broke? **B**

Hermogenes: Toward the latter, it seems to me.

Socrates: Then it's *that* which we would call, with the most justice, what a shuttle itself is.

Hermogenes: It seems that way to me.

Socrates: So whenever he needs to make a shuttle for any kind of clothing whatever, light or thick, linen or wool, wouldn't it be necessary for all of them to have the form of a shuttle, and for him to impart to each one that sort of nature that would naturally belong most beautifully to the work of each? **C**

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: And it's the same way for the other tools: when one has discovered the tool of such a nature as to belong naturally to each use, he needs to impart to the material out of which he's making it not whatever sort of attribute he himself wants, but the sort that naturally belongs. It looks like he needs to know how to put into iron the auger of such a nature as to belong naturally to each use.

Hermogenes: Exactly.

Socrates: And into wood the shuttle of such a nature as to belong naturally to each use.

Hermogenes: That's it.

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5 The Greek word is *eidos*, used above in 386E to say that actions constitute one particular form of beings. The root meaning of the word is simply the look of a thing; one looks to a look as one listens to a sound. But one must ask what the look of a shuttle itself is, if it is not the particular look suited to any one kind of thread or thickness of cloth. Or what does an action look like? What some commentators call a "theory of forms" is nowhere to be found in the dialogues, but in many of them Socrates plays with the use of the word *eidos* to get at the paradox of what any kind of thing itself is. At 390E below, as in the *Meno* (72C), looking (*blepein*) at any such thing is characterized as a looking away (*apoblepein*) from all the particulars, and in the *Phaedo* (78E-79A), the one thing named by any such word as horse or cloak is said to be invisible, seen only by an activity of thinking. The *eidos* is not an explanatory theory but a provocative proposal that there is an invisible look of visible things. The word "look" will be used in this translation for *idea*, a variant of *eidos* used interchangeably with it by Plato.

D *Socrates*: For it looks like there would be, by nature, for each form of weaving, a particular kind of shuttle, and the same way with the other tools.

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: Well then, most excellent fellow, doesn't the lawgiver need to know how to put into uttered sounds and syllables the name of such a nature as to belong naturally to each thing? Doesn't he need to look toward the very thing which a name *is* in order to make and establish all the names, if he's going to be an authoritative giver of names? And if each lawgiver does not put them into
E the same syllables, one must by no means overlook this fact, that every blacksmith, when making the same tool for the same purpose, doesn't put it into the same iron either, but all the same, as
390A long as they impart the same look, even if it's in different iron, the tool is still in the right condition, whether someone makes it here or among barbarians—isn't that so?

Hermogenes: Very much so.

Socrates: And won't you judge both a lawgiver here and one among the barbarians in the same way, and as long as the *form* of the name is appropriate to a particular thing, whatever syllables it's in, won't you consider one in any place else whatever to be no worse a lawgiver than one here?

Hermogenes: Very much so.

B *Socrates*: Who, then, is going to recognize whether the appropriate form of shuttle is present in any particular piece of wood? Its maker, the carpenter, or its user, the weaver?

Hermogenes: More likely the user, Socrates.

Socrates: And who is it who uses the work of a harp-maker? Wouldn't it be someone who'd know most beautifully how to supervise the person making it, and also someone who'd recognize whether one that's been made is well-made or not?

Hermogenes: Very much so.

Socrates: And who is that?

Hermogenes: A harpist.

Socrates: And who would that be for the work of a shipbuilder?

C *Hermogenes*: A helmsman.

Socrates: And who would most beautifully supervise the work of a lawgiver, and judge it once it's been made, both here and among the barbarians? Won't it be the one who's going to use it?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: And isn't that the person who knows how to ask questions?

Hermogenes: Very much so.

Socrates: And the same person also knows how to answer them?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: And do you refer to someone who knows how to ask and answer questions as anything other than skilled in dialectic?[6]
Hermogenes: No, just that.
Socrates: Therefore, the job of a carpenter is to make a rudder while a helmsman supervises it, if the rudder's going to turn out beautifully. **D**
Hermogenes: So it appears.
Socrates: And of a lawgiver, as it seems, it's to make a name while having a man skilled at dialectic as his supervisor, if he's going to establish the name in a beautiful way.
Hermogenes: That's it.
Socrates: Therefore, Hermogenes, the establishing of a name is liable not to be the trifling matter you assume it is, nor one for trifling people or for just anybody who comes along, and Cratylus is telling the truth when he says there are names for things naturally, and not everyone is a craftsman of names, but only that person who looks away toward the name there is by nature for each thing, and has the power to put its form into letters and syllables. **E**
Hermogenes: I have no idea how I'm supposed to counter what you're saying, Socrates. It's equally true, though, that it's not easy for me to be persuaded of it on the spot like this. But it seems to me that I'd be more persuaded by you in this way: if you were to show me what you claim the natural rightness of a name is. **391A**
Socrates: Hermogenes, you blessed fellow, I'm not saying there is any; you're forgetting the things I was saying a little while ago, that I didn't know but would look into it with you. And now that we're looking, you and I, this much has already come to light from the preceding discussion, that there *is* a certain rightness that a name has by nature and that it's not in every man to know how to establish it for any particular thing. Isn't that so? **B**
Hermogenes: Very much so.
Socrates: So the thing one ought to inquire about next, if you're eager to know it, is what in the world the rightness of it is.
Hermogenes: I'm most definitely eager to know it.
Socrates: Then look into it.
Hermogenes: And how am I supposed to look into it?
Socrates: The way to look into things most rightly, my companion, is with people who have knowledge, paying them money and assuring yourself of their gratitude. And these are the sophists, and it's by paying them a lot of money that your brother Callias seems to be wise. But since you're not in control of your inheritance, you **C**

6 See the footnote to *Euthydemus* 290C. The root sense of the word *dialektikos* is "suited to conversation." Used for a skilled human being, it could refer either to dedication to a philosophic pursuit of knowledge or to a professional specialty in argumentation, just as questioning can be aimed at putting another on the spot or at opening up one's own thinking.

need to plead your case with your brother and beg him to teach you what he learned from Protagoras about the rightness involved in such matters.

Hermogenes: But the plea would be an absurd one coming from me, Socrates, if I, who totally reject the *Truth* of Protagoras,[7] would be content with proclamations contained in that sort of "truth" as though they were worth anything.

Socrates: Well, if those things don't satisfy you, you'll have to learn
D from Homer and from the other poets.

Hermogenes: And what does Homer say about names, Socrates, and where?

Socrates: He speaks of them in many places, but the greatest and most beautiful are those in which he distinguishes the names by which human beings and gods call the same things. Don't you think he's saying something great and wonderful about rightness of names in these places? For it's clear that the gods at least call things by
E names that are right by nature. Don't you think so?

Hermogenes: I know very well that if they call things names they call them rightly. But what sorts of things are these that you're talking about?

Socrates: Don't you know that he speaks of the river in the land of Troy that fought Hephaestus in single combat, "which gods call Xanthus but men Scamander"? [8]

Hermogenes: I do indeed.

392A *Socrates*: Well, what about it? Don't you think that's a splendid thing to know, that the way of referring to that river that's right is Xanthus rather than Scamander? Or, if you prefer, about the bird of which he says, "gods address it as chalcis but men cumindis," do you consider it a trivial thing to learn how much more right it is to call the same bird chalcis instead of cumindis? Or Batieia and Myrina,
B and many other examples from this poet as well as others? Now maybe these matters are beyond what you and I can work out, but it seems to me a more human sort of thing to examine, and an easier one, is the instance of Scamandrius and Astyanax, which he claims are names for Hector's son, and what he says the rightness of them is. For presumably you know those lines in which the things I'm speaking of are present.

Hermogenes: Quite well.

Socrates: So which of the names do you think Homer regarded as more right to apply to the boy, Astyanax or Scamandrius?

C *Hermogenes*: I have no way to say.

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7 *Truth* was the title of Protagoras's book. See above, 385E and following.

8 *Iliad* XX, 74. The following examples are all from the same poem: the bird, XIV, 291; II. 813, a hill; and Hector's son XXII, 506-7.

Socrates: Look at it this way: suppose someone were to ask you whether you think those who are more sensible or more senseless call things by names that are more right.
Hermogenes: It's obvious that I'd say the more sensible ones do.
Socrates: And in cities, is it the women who seem to you to be more sensible, or the men, speaking of a class as a whole?
Hermogenes: The men.
Socrates: And don't you know that Homer says Hector's child was called Astyanax by the Trojans? Isn't it obvious that he was called Scamandrius by the women, since the men called him Astyanax? **D**
Hermogenes: It looks that way, at any rate.[9]
Socrates: And Homer too, didn't he regard the Trojan men as wiser than their women?
Hermogenes: I imagine so.
Socrates: Therefore he thought "Astyanax" applied to the boy more rightly than "Scamandrius"?
Hermogenes: It appears so.
Socrates: Then let's consider why that would be. Or does he himself point out the reason to us most beautifully? For he says, **E**

> He alone kept safe their city and long walls.

So for that reason, as it seems, it's right to call that protector's son the *astyanax*[10] of that which his father protected—as Homer says.
Hermogenes: It appears so to me.
Socrates: But why? I don't understand it yet myself, Hermogenes; do you understand it?
Hermogenes: By Zeus, I don't.
Socrates: Well, good fellow, didn't Homer also give Hector himself his name? **393A**
Hermogenes: What about it?
Socrates: Just that it seems to me this is also pretty close to Astyanax, and these names seem likely to be Greek. For *anax* and *hektôr* mean pretty much the same thing, so that both are kingly names, since whatever anyone is a lord of, he is doubtless a holder of as well. For it's clear that he rules it and possesses and holds it. Or do I seem to you to be saying nothing, and am I ignorantly assuming that I've gotten hold of some sort of clue to Homer's opinion about rightness of names? **B**
Hermogenes: By Zeus, no, it doesn't seem to me you are at all, and maybe you're onto something.

9 Hermogenes' caution is more sensible than Socrates' conclusion. The word "Trojans" in the line Socrates refers to (XXII, 506) is a masculine form, but he either forgets or ignores VI, 402-3, where Homer says that it was *Hector* who gave his baby the name Scamandrius, while everyone else called him Astyanax as a mark of honor.

10 Lord of the city.

Socrates: At any rate, it's surely a just thing, as it appears to me, to call the offspring of a lion a lion, and the offspring of a horse a horse. I'm not talking about some sort of monstrosity, other than a horse, that
C might be born from a horse, but about that which is the offspring of a kind by nature—that's what I'm talking about. If a horse, contrary to nature, gives birth to a calf, a natural offspring of a cow, it's not appropriate to call it a colt but a calf, and if something that's not the offspring of a human being is born from a human being, I imagine it wouldn't be appropriate to call that offspring a human being; and it's the same way with trees and everything else. Isn't that the way it seems to you as well?

Hermogenes: I share your opinion.

Socrates: Beautifully said, but watch out that I don't lead you astray.
D For by the same argument, if any offspring is born of a king, it's appropriate to call it a king. And it's no matter whether it's in one set of syllables or another; it means the same thing. Or if any letter is added or subtracted, that's no matter either, as long as the *being* of the thing is holding steady in a way that's evident in the name.

Hermogenes: How do you mean that?

Socrates: It's nothing complicated, just the same sort of thing you know about the letters, that we say their names and not the letters
E themselves, except for four of them, *e*, *u*, *o*, and *ô*.[11] For the other vowels and consonants, you know that we say them by placing other letters around them to make their names, but as long as we include them in a way that makes the force of them evident, it's right to call each one by that name which makes it evident to us. With beta, for example, you see that it doesn't cause any problem when one adds the eta, tau, and alpha that would keep the whole name from making evident the nature of that letter which the lawgiver intends, so beautifully did he know how to give the letters their names.

Hermogenes: You seem to me to be telling the truth.

394A *Socrates*: And doesn't the same argument apply to a king? For in any instance, a king will be born of a king, a good man from a good man, a good-looking man from a good-looking man, and likewise with everything else, another such offspring born of each kind, if no monstrosity is born, so that it's appropriate to call them by the same names. But it's acceptable to vary the syllables, so that, to someone in an educated condition, things that are the same might seem to be different from one another, just as doctors' medicines that are the same seem different to us when the colors and smells
B vary; but to the doctor, since he looks at the power of the medicines, they seem the same, and he isn't knocked off track by extraneous things. So probably someone who knows about names also looks

11 The use of the names epsilon, upsilon, omicron, and omega was not yet prevalent in Socrates' time. The vowels' sounds served as their names.

at the power of them, and isn't knocked off track if some letter is added, transposed, or removed, or even if the force of the name is present in a completely different set of letters. So "Astyanax" and "Hector," which we were just talking about, have none of the same letters except the t, but still mean the same thing. And which of the letters does "Archeopolis"[12] have in common with them? But it still makes the same thing evident. And there are many other names that mean nothing other than "king," and still others that mean "general," such as "Agis," "Polemarchus," and "Eupolemos," and others for medical skill, "Iatrocles" and "Akesimbrotos." And we could probably come up with a great many others with different syllables and letters, but with a force that gives voice to the same thing. Does it appear so, or not? **C**

Hermogenes: Very much so. **D**

Socrates: So it's appropriate to give the same names to those who are born in accord with nature.

Hermogenes: Quite so.

Socrates: And what about those who depart from nature, who are born in the form of a monstrosity? When, for instance, an impious son is born of a good and god-fearing man, isn't that just like the earlier cases, as when a horse brought forth a cow as offspring, and wouldn't it be necessary, presumably, for him not to have the given name of his begetter but that of the kind to which he'd belong?

Hermogenes: Quite so.

Socrates: Therefore, it's appropriate to give an impious person born of a pious one the name that belongs to his kind. **E**

Hermogenes: That's it.

Socrates: Not "Theophilus," it seems, or "Mnesitheus,"[13] or anything like that, but whatever means the opposite of that, if indeed names are to attain rightness.

Hermogenes: More than anything, Socrates.

Socrates: So too, Hermogenes, "Orestes"[14] is liable to be right, whether some chance or some poet gave him the name, indicating by that name a brutality of nature, a savagery in him, and a mountain-like quality.

Hermogenes: It appears that way, Socrates. **395A**

Socrates: And it looks like his father's name was also in accord with nature.

Hermogenes: So it appears.

12 "Ruler of the city," with *polis* and *archôn* roughly equivalent to *astu* and *anax*. The examples equivalent to general mean leader, war-ruler, and good at war, and those signifying medical skill mean famed doctor and healer of mortals.

13 "God-loving" and "mindful of god."

14 "Man of the mountains"; Socrates interprets the character of the legendary killer of his mother not sympathetically, as Aeschylus did in the *Oresteia*, but in the same way Homer depicts the Cyclops Polyphemus (*Odyssey* IX, 186-192).

Socrates: For "Agamemnon" is likely to be the sort of person to work hard at what seems right to him and endure the bringing to accomplishment of his intentions through virtue. A sign of it is his remaining at Troy in suffering and endurance. So the name
B "Agamemnon" signifies that this man is admirable for sticking to it.[15] And "Atreus" is probably right too, because of his murder of Chrysippus and also what he did to Thyestes that was so cruel—all of that was ruinous and disastrous[16] to virtue. Now the given form of the name is a little twisted and hidden, so that it doesn't make the nature of the man evident to everyone, but to those who understand about names it makes evident enough what "Atreus"
C intends; for in view of his stubbornness, his fearlessness, and his disastrous recklessness, the name applies to him rightly in every respect. And it seems to me that for Pelops, his name too is tailor-made to apply to him, since this name signifies someone who sees what's nearby.[17]

Hermogenes: How so?

Socrates: For instance, it's said of that man somewhere that in the murder of Myrtilus he was incapable of thinking ahead or foreseeing the long-term effects on his whole race, and how much
D misfortune it would be filled with, seeing only what was nearby and on the spot—that is, what comes near—since he was so eager to get a marriage with Hippodameia by any means. And for Tantalus, everyone would regard the name as given to him rightly and according to nature, if the things said about him are true.

Hermogenes: What sorts of things are those?

Socrates: Presumably both the misfortunes that came to him while he was still alive, many and terrible ones—and last among them his whole country was overthrown—and in the realm of Hades
E after he'd died, it's wondrous how concordant with his name the *balancing* of the stone was; it seems practically as though someone who wanted to name him *the most weighed down with misery* had given the name in a concealed way and said "Tantalus"[18] instead of that; it looks like it was in some such way that the chance effects of tradition supplied the name. And for the one who's said to be his
396A father, namely Zeus, it appears that the name applies altogether beautifully, but it's not easy to understand. For Zeus's name is practically like a formula, and by dividing it in two, some of us use one

15 *Agastos* (admirable) for *epimonê* (sticking to it).

16 *Atêros*, derived from the name of *Atê*, the goddess who lured humans and other gods into reckless acts of blind self-destruction.

17 *Ho ta eggus horôn*, who would have an eye (*ôps*) only for what comes near (*pelas*).

18 Regarded as practically an anagram for *talantaton* (most weighed down with misery) with a further clue in the visual image of balancing (*talanteia*).

part and some the other, since some call him Zena and others Dia,[19] but when they're combined into one they make the nature of the god evident, which is exactly what we're claiming it's appropriate for a name to be capable of accomplishing. For there's no one who is more responsible for *living*, for us and for everything else, than the ruler and king of all things. So that means this god is rightly named, *through whom* living is always present in all living things; but as I say, it's been divided into two, Diï and Zeni, though it's one name. And to someone first hearing it, there might seem a certain impertinence in calling this god a son of Cronos, when it would be reasonable for Zeus to be the offspring of some great thinking power; but it's because *koros* signifies not "child" but the purity and lack of contamination of his intellect.[20] And *he* is the son of Uranus, as the story goes, and it's a beautiful thing, in turn, for the sight of what's above to be called by this name "uranian," for *one who sees what's above*, and this, Hermogenes, is exactly where the cosmic thinkers say a pure intellect comes from, so this name is rightly applied to the heavens.[21] And if I remembered Hesiod's genealogy, with some still higher ancestors than these that he mentions, I wouldn't stop going over how rightly their names apply to them until I had tried out this wisdom that has just now so suddenly come over me, I know not from what source, to see what it will produce, and whether, after all, it fails to make it through or not. B C D

Hermogenes: In fact, Socrates, you seem to me practically to be like someone who's suddenly been inspired to chant prophecy.

Socrates: Yes, Hermogenes, and I blame it especially on Euthyphro, the one from the Prospaltian district, that it's come over me, because I was with him early this morning and lent him my ears for quite a bit. So it's likely that he, being inspired, not only filled my ears with supernatural wisdom, but also gained possession of my soul. So it seems to me the way we should go about things is to use this supernatural wisdom today to finish investigating what concerns names, but tomorrow, if it seems good to you folks as well, that we dismiss it with offerings to Zeus and purify ourselves, once we've E

19 These are the poetic and ordinary accusative forms of the name (with the two datives a few lines below). There was an obsolete nominative, *Dis*, from which the other cases in ordinary use were declined. Socrates associates the one form with living (*zên*) and the other with "the one through whom" (*di' hon*).

20 Socrates' argument seems to be that Cronos was traditionally depicted as unintelligent, but his name hints at the opposite, since *Kronos* contains *koros*, which can mean child, but should be taken here to suggest the verb *korein*, meaning to sweep clean, so *koros* + *nous* = *Kronos* (pure intellect).

21 *Ouranô*, dative of "the heavens," is equated with "one who sees what's above" (*horôsa ta anô*).

397A found someone formidable enough to perform such purification rites, whether it's one of the priests or one of the sophists.[22]

Hermogenes: Well *I* go along with that, since I'd be very pleased to hear the rest of what concerns names.

Socrates: Well, that's what we should do. So where do you want us to start examining them? For what we've done is embark upon a certain general project, so that we'll be able to see whether the names themselves will bear witness to us that they're applied to particular things in a way that doesn't come altogether from chance, but has **B** a certain rightness about it. Now the names by which heroes, and human beings generally, are spoken of, might possibly mislead us, since many of them are applied in accord with the given names of ancestors, when they're not suited at all to some of them, as we were talking about at the beginning; and many, like Eutychides, Sosias, Theophilus,[23] and lots of others, are given as though the givers are praying. It seems to me one ought to leave aside names of that sort, but it's likely that we'll discover names that have been rightly applied especially among things that always are and are by **C** nature. For there it's fitting that the bestowing of names be carried out with the utmost seriousness, and perhaps some of them were even given by a power more divine than that of human beings.

Hermogenes: You seem to me to be making a beautiful point, Socrates.

Socrates: Then wouldn't the just thing be to start with the gods, by considering how in the world it's right for them to be called by this very name "gods"?

Hermogenes: Likely so.

Socrates: Then I suspect it's something like this: it appears to me that the first human beings around Greece believed only in those gods **D** that many of the barbarians do now, the sun, moon, earth, stars, and heavens. So because they saw that all these were always traversing their courses, or *running*, it was from this nature of running[24] that they gave them the name "gods." Later, when they came to know of all the others, they addressed them by this name they already had. Does any of what I'm saying seem likely to be true, or none of it?

Hermogenes: It seems quite likely.

Socrates: So what should we look into next?

E *Hermogenes*: Obviously the lesser divinities.

Socrates: And in a true sense, Hermogenes, what in the world does the name "divinities" intend? See if it seems to you there's anything in what I say.

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22 In Plato's *Sophist*, 226B-231B, an attempt is made to understand sophists as practicing an art of purification (*kathartikê*) by refuting opinions that masquerade as knowledge.

23 Meaning "born to good fortune," "deliverer," and "beloved of god."

24 *The-ein*; the word for gods is *theoi*.

Hermogenes: Just say it.
Socrates: Well, do you know what Hesiod says the divinities are?
Hermogenes: It doesn't come to mind.
Socrates: Or that he says a golden race of human beings was the first to be born?
Hermogenes: That I do know.
Socrates: Well, he says of it,[25]

> But since this race has been covered over by fate,
> They are called holy divinities under the earth, **398A**
> Good guardians, warding off evil from mortal humans.

Hermogenes: What about it?
Socrates: Just that I imagine he doesn't mean the golden race is of a nature made of gold, but that it's good and beautiful. An indication of this to me is that he also claims *we*'re an iron race.
Hermogenes: What you say is true.
Socrates: And don't you imagine that if anyone of the present day is good, he'd say that person belongs to the golden race? **B**
Hermogenes: Likely so.
Socrates: And are the good people anything other than the sensible ones?
Hermogenes: They're the sensible ones, yes.
Socrates: Well then, this, more than anything else, is what he means by "the divinities," as it seems to me: because they were sensible and *knowledgeable* he called them "divinities," and in our ancient dialect the word means the same thing.[26] So he puts it beautifully, and so do many other poets, all those who say that when anyone who's good dies he has a high honor and fate, and becomes a divinity in **C** accord with the name given to good sense. So by this authority, I too set it down that every man who is good is a divine being, both in life and in death, and is rightly called a divinity.
Hermogenes: And I too, as it seems to me, Socrates, am absolutely with you in casting my vote on that. But what would a "hero" be?
Socrates: That's not much trouble to get a notion of, because their name has been slightly altered to make evident an origin from erotic love.
Hermogenes: How do you mean?
Socrates: Don't you know that heroes are half-gods?
Hermogenes: What about it?
Socrates: Surely they were all born either because a god fell in love **D** with a mortal or a mortal with a goddess. Now if you consider this also in the old Attic dialect, you'll understand it better, since

25 *Works and Days*, 121-123.

26 *Daimones* is equated with *daêmones*.

that will make it clear to you that, as far as the name goes, it's a slightly altered version of the name of *love*, out of which the heroes had their birth.[27] And either this is what one means by "heroes," or that they were wise men and formidable rhetoricians and skilled at dialectic, so that they were competent at *asking questions*, since *discoursing* is being articulate in speech. So when they're spoken
E of in the Attic dialect that I was mentioning just now, the heroes correspond to certain rhetoricians and questioners, and hence the heroic tribe turns out to be a race of rhetoricians and sophists. That's no trouble to get a notion of, but in the case of human beings it's more trouble to see why in the world they're called "human beings." Do you have anything to say about it?

Hermogenes: And where, my good fellow, would I get it? Even if I were able to find out anything about it, I wouldn't make the effort, because I believe you'll find out more than I can myself.

399A *Socrates*: You have faith in Euthyphro's inspiration, it seems.

Hermogenes: Obviously so.

Socrates: And you're right to have faith in it, since at this very moment it appears to me that I've gotten an exquisite notion, and I'm in danger, if I'm not careful, of becoming wiser than anyone ought to be before this day is out. Just pay attention to what I say. First, it's necessary to keep in mind this fact about names, that we often insert and take out letters, making the names differ from what we mean, and we change the accents too. Take for instance "*Diï philos*"; so that we'd
B get this to be a name instead of a phrase, we took one of the two iotas right out and pronounced the middle syllable with a grave instead of an acute accent.[28] And in other cases it's the opposite: we insert letters and pronounce grave accents as acute.

Hermogenes: What you say is true.

Socrates: Now then, the name for human beings is also one of those that had this happen, as it seems to me. That is, it's a name that came from a phrase when one letter alpha was removed and the final accent became grave.

Hermogenes: How do you mean?

C *Socrates*: Like this: this name "human being" signifies that the other animals don't look into or gather up or *observe* the things they see, but a human being, at the same time that he's seen—that's the *has seen*—also observes and takes account of that which he has seen.

27 *Hêrôs* (old Attic *hêeros*) is connected by Socrates with *erôs;* he goes on to connections with *erôtan* (ask a question) and *eirein* (discoursing).

28 The phrase, meaning "dear to Zeus," becomes the name Diphilus.

And that's why a human being, alone among the animals, is rightly *named* a "human being," *one who observes what he has seen*.[29]

Hermogenes: What comes after that, then? Shall I ask you about something I'd be glad to learn?

Socrates: By all means.

Hermogenes: There seems to me, then, to be a certain thing that comes next to these; for I suppose we talk about a "soul" and a "body" of a human being. **D**

Socrates: Of course we do.

Hermogenes: Then let's try to go over these the way we did the previous ones.

Socrates: You mean examine how it's fitting for a soul to come by that name, and then in turn a body?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: Well, just speaking offhand, I imagine those who named the soul intended something like this: since, after all, when a soul is present in a body it's responsible for its being alive, providing it with the power of breathing and *restoring* it,[30] along with the fact that when the restoring stops, the body dies and ceases to be, it's from this that they seem to me to have called it a "soul." —Hold still though, if you will, because I seem to be getting a glimmer of something that will be more convincing than that to Euthyphro's circle, since it seems to me they'd look down on that and regard it as unsophisticated; so consider whether the following pleases you. **E** **400A**

Hermogenes: Just tell it.

Socrates: Other than the soul, what seems to you to hold and sustain the nature of every body, so that it lives and moves around?

Hermogenes: Nothing else.

Socrates: And what about the nature of everything else? Don't you believe Anaxagoras that it's intellect and soul that do the ordering and upholding?

Hermogenes: *I* do.

29 Socrates equates *anthrôpos* with *anathrôn ha opôpe*. He takes the verb *anathrein* for "observe" as combining the meanings of *episkopein* (to examine or look into) and *analogizesthai* (to gather up or produce an account); the latter two verbs are the crucial terms used in 185B-186E of Plato's *Theaetetus*, the climactic argument in that dialogue, to show that a power over and above sense perception must be at work in knowing. A passage in the Sherlock Holmes stories may also be worth mentioning: when Dr. Watson cannot tell him how many steps lead up to their flat, Holmes says, "You *see*, Watson, but you do not *observe*."

30 *Anapsuchein*, to restore or refresh, is derived from *psuchein*, to cool, which was the standard etymology of *psuchê*, soul.

B *Socrates*: Therefore it would hold up beautifully to give to this power that sustains and upholds nature the name *nature-holder*, and it's possible to pretty it up and say "soul."[31]

Hermogenes: Very much so, and to me at least, this explanation seems more artful than the other one.

Socrates: Well, it is; still, it appears ridiculous that the name would really have been given that way by whoever named it.

Hermogenes: So how do we claim it stands with the one after this?

Socrates: You mean body?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: It seems to me there's more than one way to go with this one,
C if one varies it a little, even a very little. For some say it's a *tomb* for the soul, as if the soul were buried in its present condition; on the other hand, because it's by means of this that the soul signifies whatever it signifies, it's also for that reason rightly called a *signifier*. What seems most likely to me, though, is that the Orphic sect established this name, with the notion that the soul is doing penance for things it's being punished for, and it has this enclosure, like a prison, so that it's locked up safe; so until its debt is paid in full, this, just as the name says, is for the soul its *lockup*, and there's no need to alter even one letter.[32]

D *Hermogenes*: These things seem to me to have been covered sufficiently, Socrates; but could we perhaps examine the names of the gods, the sort of thing you were just now doing with that of Zeus, to see by what manner of rightness their names are applied to them?

Socrates: Yes, by Zeus, Hermogenes, if we have any sense, we can see that as far as one manner, the most beautiful one, is concerned, on the subject of the gods we know nothing at all about them or about the names, whatever they are, that they call themselves,
E since it's obvious that *they* use the true names. But then there's a second manner of rightness, as in prayers it's the custom for us to pray that we're calling them by whatever names and genealogies
401A they're pleased to be named, since we don't know anything else to do, since that seems to me a beautiful way for custom to handle it. So if you want to, let's look into it by making a sort of preliminary disclaimer to the gods that we won't be examining anything about *them*—for we don't consider ourselves competent to examine them—but only about human beings, and whatever sort of opinion

31 *Psuchê* is now equated with *phusechê*; the verb translated "pretty up" has the same root (*komps*) as the word translated as "exquisite" in 399A and "ingenious" below at 402D and 405D.

32 *Sôma*, body, is equated first with *sêma*, which has the general sense of a mark or signifier and from its application to a grave marker comes also to mean tomb, and then is itself, in its own spelling, interpreted by Socrates as a noun cognate with the verb *sôzein*, to save, keep safe, or lock safely away.

they have when they give them names, for there's nothing to be offended at about that.

Hermogenes: You seem to me to be speaking in a level-headed way, Socrates; let's do as you say.

Socrates: Then where else should we start but with Hestia,[33] as the custom is? **B**

Hermogenes: That would certainly be just.

Socrates: So, what should one say the person who gave the name Hestia was thinking in naming her that?

Hermogenes: By Zeus, I don't suppose that's easy to say.

Socrates: At any rate, my good Hermogenes, it's likely that the people who first established names were no slouches but cosmic thinkers and big talkers.

Hermogenes: What about it?

Socrates: It's quite apparent to me that the establishment of names came from certain human beings of that sort, and even if one **C** examines the names in other dialects, what each one intends is nonetheless revealed. For instance, in the case of that which we call *being-ness*, there are those who call it *essence* and others who call it *substance*.[34] So, first of all, from one of these names, it's reasonable for the being-ness of things to be called "Hestia," and there's also the fact that we say of anything that partakes of being-ness that *it is*, and from this too it could rightly be called "Hestia." And this would seem to suggest that we too called being "essence" in ancient times. Furthermore, if one considers the matter with the sacrifices **D** in mind, those who established them intended it that way, since any people who gave the name "essence" to the being-ness of all things would be likely to single out Hestia as the first among all the gods to sacrifice to. As for those, on the other hand, who gave it the name "substance," they'd regard things pretty much the way Heracleitus did, with all things in motion and nothing staying still; so they'd consider the cause and originator of things to be their *impulsance*,[35] which would be a beautiful reason for it to be named *substance*. And let that be the last on this subject, since we **E** know next to nothing about it. After Hestia, the just thing would be to look into Rhea and Cronos, though we've already gone over Cronos's name. Maybe I'm just talking nonsense.

Hermogenes: Why's that, Socrates?

33 Hestia, corresponding to the Roman Vesta, was the virgin goddess of the hearth, and the one named first when oaths were sworn. It was also the custom for a portion of all sacrifices to be dedicated first to her, as the one who sanctified the sacrificial fire.

34 The three words in Greek are just dialect variants: *ousia, essia,* and *ôsia*. Their meaning refers to whatever is constant and determinate in a thing, to what it *is*. "It is," below, translates *esti*.

35 *To ôthoun*, "what pushes," is equated with *ôsia*.

Socrates: Good fellow, I've stirred up a swarm of wisdom in my mind.

Hermogenes: Of what sort, exactly?

402A *Socrates*: It's totally ridiculous to say it, but I think it has a certain persuasiveness.

Hermogenes: What's that?

Socrates: I seem to be having a vision of Heracleitus speaking some ancient words of wisdom, practically going back to the time of Cronos and Rhea, things Homer used to say too.

Hermogenes: How do you mean that?

Socrates: Surely Heracleitus says that "all things are passing and nothing stays," and likening the things that are to the flow of a river, he says, "you can't step into the same river twice."

Hermogenes: That's so.

B *Socrates*: What about it, then? Does it seem to you that the person who established the names "Rhea" and "Cronos" for the ancestors of the rest of the gods intended anything other that what Heracleitus said? Do you think it was by chance that he gave them both names meaning *flowing streams*?[36] In the same way, Homer also speaks of "Ocean, the source of the gods, and Tethys their mother,"[37] and I believe Hesiod does too. And Orpheus says somewhere that,

> Beautifully flowing Ocean began it, marrying first,
> **C** He who took to wife his sister Tethys, born of the same mother.

Consider, then, how they all sound the same note as one another, and tend toward the things Heracleitus said.

Hermogenes: You appear to me to have a point there, Socrates, but I don't have any notion of what Tethys' name means.

Socrates: Why, this name itself almost says that it's a thinly veiled name for a rushing stream. For something that's *propelled along* **D** and *filtered* is an image of rushing stream, and the name "Tethys" is made of both of these together.[38]

Hermogenes: That's ingenious, anyway, Socrates.

Socrates: Why wouldn't it be? But what comes after that? We've spoken of Zeus.

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: So let's speak of his brothers Poseidon and Pluto, as well as the other name the latter is called.

Hermogenes: By all means.

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36 *Rheuma* is equated with *Rhea*, and presumably *krounos* with *Kronos*.

37 *Iliad* XIV, 201 and 302. Orpheus was a legendary pre-Homeric poet; none of the writings attributed to him survive except in brief fragments like the lines given here..

38 *Têthus* is taken as made from *diattômenon* plus *êthoumenon*.

Socrates: Well it appears to me that Poseidon's name was given because the nature of the sea impeded someone who was walking and didn't let him go forward any more, but acted just like fetters on his feet. So he named the god who was the source of this power "Poseidon" because he was a *foot-fetterer*, and the epsilon was possibly inserted for decoration. But maybe it doesn't mean that, but at first it was pronounced with two lambdas instead of the sigma, since the god is one who *knows a lot*. Or maybe from his causing earthquakes he was named *the shaker* and the pi and delta were added.[39] As for Pluto, he was named that as the giver of *riches*, because riches come up from under the earth; as for "Hades," it seems to me most people assume that *the invisible* is addressed by that name, and because that scares them, they call him Pluto.[40] E 403A

Hermogenes: But how does it appear to *you*, Socrates? B

Socrates: Human beings seem to me to be mistaken in more ways than one about the power of this god, and he doesn't deserve to be feared. They fear him because once any of us is dead he's over there forever, and because the soul goes off to him stripped of its body, and that terrifies them. But to me all of that, as well as the sovereignty and name of the god, point to one and the same thing.

Hermogenes: How so?

Socrates: I'll tell you how it appears to me. For tell me, which is a stronger bond on any living thing, any at all, to keep it in any place at all, constraint or desire? C

Hermogenes: Desire prevails by far, Socrates.

Socrates: Then don't you imagine there'd be many who'd escape Hades' realm if he didn't bind those who go there with the strongest bond?

Hermogenes: Obviously.

Socrates: Therefore, if he binds them with the greatest bond, it looks like he binds them with some sort of desire, and not with constraint.

Hermogenes: It appears so.

Socrates: Aren't there also many desires?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: Therefore he binds them with the desire that's the greatest among desires, if he's going to hold them with the greatest bond. D

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: And is there any greater desire than the one that arises when one believes that by associating with someone he'll be a better man?

39 *Poseidôn* is interpreted as *posi-desmon*, *polla-eidôn*, or *seiôn*.

40 Of the three brothers, Zeus ruled the sky, Poseidon the sea, and Pluto everything under the earth. The word *ploutos*, wealth, understood as having its source in deposits of precious metals, was a standard etymology for *Ploutôn*; as ruler of the realm of the dead, he was also called Hades (*Haidês*), which was also commonly associated with *to aides*, the invisible.

Hermogenes: By Zeus, Socrates, none whatsoever.

Socrates: Therefore, Hermogenes, let's assert that this is the reason none of those over there has been willing to come back here, not
E even the Sirens, but they and everyone else have been captivated by his charms, so beautiful, it seems are the words Hades knows how to speak; and by this account at least, the god is a perfect sophist and a great benefactor of those who are with him—he who also sends up such a quantity of good things to those here, so many advantages does he have there—and he gets the name "Pluto" from that. Then too, there's his unwillingness to associate with human beings when they have bodies, but only to come
404A into their company at a time when the soul is pure of all the evils and desires involved with the body—doesn't that seem to you to be the mark of a philosopher and of one who's well aware that in these conditions he can detain them by binding them with the desire involved with virtue, but while they have the excitement and madness of the body, not even his father Cronos would have the power to detain them with himself, even if he bound them in the chains he's said to have?

Hermogenes: You're liable to have a point there, Socrates.

B *Socrates*: Even his name "Hades" is far from being named after "the invisible," Hermogenes, but is much more apt to come from *knowing* everything beautiful; that's why he was called *Hades* by the lawgiver.[41]

Hermogenes: Okay; but what about Demeter and Hera and Apollo and Athena and Hephaestus and Ares and the rest of the gods? How do we account for them?

Socrates: Demeter[42] appears to have been called "Demeter," for the gift
C of food, which she *gives like a mother*, and Hera is a *love-object*, just as Zeus is said to have fallen in love with her—though maybe the lawgiver was a cosmic thinker and was naming the *air* in disguised form as "Hera" by putting the beginning at the end, as you'd notice if you pronounced the name Hera over and over. Then there's "Pherrephatta." Most people are afraid of this name, and also of "Apollo," from their inexperience, apparently, about rightness of names. For when they change the one to "Phersephone" and look
D at it, it appears terrifying to them, but what it means is that the goddess is wise. For inasmuch as things are being carried along,

41 *Haidês* is now equated with *eidenai*, "to know," the perfective infinitive of the verb "to see," rather than with *aides* (invisible), an adjective derived from the same root with a privative prefix.

42 Interpretations in this speech are as follows: *Dêmêtêr = didousa hôs mêtêr. Hêra = eratê* or *aêr. Pherrephatta* and *Phersephonê* were poetic variants of Persephone's name; the latter sounds like *pherousa phonon* (bringer of slaughter), and Socrates replaces it with *epaphê tou pheromenou*. *Apollô* sounds like *apolluôn* (destroyer), a "dangerous name" rejected at length below.

what grasps and comes to grips with them and has the power to follow them would be wisdom. So the goddess would rightly be called "Pherepapha," or some such thing, for her wisdom and for *coming to grips with what's carried along*—and that's also why Hades consorts with her, because he's wise and she's that way too—but as it is, people distort her name, giving more importance to what's easy on the tongue than to truth, so as to call her "Pherrephatta." It's the same too with Apollo, as I say; most people are in fear at **E** the name of the god as if it means something terrifying, or haven't you noticed that?

Hermogenes: Very much so, and you're telling the truth.

Socrates: But what it *is*, it seems to me, applies most beautifully to the god's power.

Hermogenes: How so?

Socrates: I'll try to indicate what appears to me, for there's no one name **405A** that's more fitting to the four powers that belong to the god in such a way that it gets them all and in one way or another makes evident music, prophecy, medicine, and archery.

Hermogenes: Speak on, for the name you're speaking of is a strange one to me.

Socrates: It's a highly harmonious one, inasmuch as he's the god of music. First of all, the purifying and purgings that go with both medicine and prophecy, the fumigations with aromatic potions **B** for medicinal or prophetic purposes, and the baths and showers involved in such activities—these all have one specific potency, don't they, to render a human being pure in body and soul?

Hermogenes: Very much so.

Socrates: So he would be the god who purifies people, cleanses them, and redeems them from such evils?

Hermogenes: Very much so.

Socrates: Well then, for these acts of redemption and cleansing, since **C** he's a doctor for such ills, he would rightly be called *the one who cleanses*,[43] but for his prophecy with its truth and honesty, which are the same thing, he would rightly be called by the name the Thessalians call him, since the people of Thessaly all call this god "Aplon." And because he's always a master of arrows by his archery, he's the *ever-darting one*. As for his music, one must understand that an alpha in many cases signifies "together," and here the moving together in the heavens, around what people call the "poles," as well as in the harmony in song, which is called concordance, because **D**

43 Interpretations in this speech are, for Apollo, *apolouôn* (one who cleanses), *apoluôn* (one who redeems), *haploun* (without duplicity, honest), *aeiballôn* (ever-darting one), and *homopolôn* (one who moves things together), for the Muses, *môsthai* (seeking), for Leto, *ethelêmôn* (one who is willing) or *leion* (smooth), and for Artemis, *to artemes* (wholesomeness), *aretês histôr* (one skilled in virtue), and/or *aroton misêsasês* (one who abhors the sex act).

all these things *move together* by one sort of harmony or another, as those who are ingenious about music and astronomy assert; and this god is the conductor of the harmony, *moving together* all these things among both gods and human beings. So in the same way we gave the names "fellow traveler" and "bedfellow" to those who share the same journey or the same bed, substituting an alpha for
E the word "same," so too we gave him the name "Apollo," when he was really "Homopolo," inserting another lambda because otherwise it would have sounded like a dangerous name. Even now, some people suspect just that and fear the name as though it signified some sort of destruction, because they don't look at the
406A force of it the right way, while really, as was just said, it's applied because it touches on all the powers of the god, as *honest*, *ever-darting*, *cleansing*, and *moving things together*. As for the Muses, and music as a whole, it looks like this name is given by derivation from a *seeking* after inquiry and philosophy. The name "Leto" appears to come from the gentleness of this goddess, for her being *willing* to grant whatever anyone begs for. But maybe it's the way those with foreign dialects say it, since many call her "Letho"; then it looks like she's called Letho by those who call her that for a character
B that's not rough but gentle and *smooth*. And it appears that Artemis is named for her *wholesomeness* and orderliness, on account of her passion for virginity; but maybe the one who gave the goddess her name was calling her *skilled in virtue*, or possibly *one who abhors the sex act* of a man upon a woman. For one of these reasons, of for all of them, the giver of this name gave it to the goddess.

Hermogenes: What about Dionysus and Aphrodite?[44]

Socrates: You're asking big questions, child of Hipponicus, but there's a
C serious way of talking about the names of these and also a playful one. So ask some other people for the serious one, but there's no reason not to go over the playful one, since even the gods are fond of playing. Now Dionysus, as the *giver of wine*, might playfully be called "Didoinysus," and wine, because it makes most of those who drink it *think they have sense* when they have none, it could most justly be called "oionous." As for Aphrodite, it's not worth
D contradicting Hesiod instead of going along with him that she's called "Aphrodite" for her origin *from out of the sea-foam*.

Hermogenes: But surely, Socrates, since you're an Athenian, you're not going to forget Athena, and not Hephaestus and Ares either.

Socrates: Not likely.

Hermogenes: I thought not.

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44 Socrates' mention of Artemis' abhorrence of sex makes Hermogenes wonder about the gods at the opposite extreme. Interpretations in the next speech are, for Dionysus, *ho didous ton oinon* (giver of wine), for wine itself, *oionous* (wine-sense), and for Aphrodite, *tou aphrou* (from out of the sea-foam). Socrates' sense of humor is perhaps tamer than Hermogenes would have expected.

Socrates: And it's no trouble to say why her other name is applied to her.
Hermogenes: What's that?
Socrates: We call her "Pallas," you know.
Hermogenes: How could I not?
Socrates: Well, I imagine we're right in regarding this name as being taken from her dancing in armor, for raising oneself up or raising anything else from the ground or in one's hands is what we call *brandishing*, you know, or *flaunting*, and dancing or swaggering. **E** **407A**
Hermogenes: Very much so.
Socrates: Well that's what "Pallas" is for.[45]
Hermogenes: And it would certainly be right. But how do you account for her other name?
Socrates: Athena?
Hermogenes: Yes.
Socrates: That's a weightier matter, my friend. And the ancients seem to have regarded Athena the same way as those who are so clever nowadays about Homer. For most of them, when they interpret the poet, say that in Athena he represents intellect and thought, and the maker of names seems to have been thinking something like that about her, but to have said it still more grandly as *divine intelligence*, as though he were saying that she's "Ha-theonoa," using an alpha instead of an eta in foreign fashion, and taking out the iota and sigma. Or maybe it wasn't that way, but he called her "Theonoë," in the sense that she *has* intelligence *about* divine things surpassing that of all others; and it wouldn't be far off to want to address this goddess as "Êthonoë" in the sense of *intelligence in her character*, and later the name-giver himself or some others rearranged it into something that they imagined was more beautiful, and called her "Athenaa." **B** **C**
Hermogenes: And what about Hephaestus? How do you account for that?
Socrates: Are you asking about the high-born one *skilled with light*?[46]
Hermogenes: It looks like I am.
Socrates: Isn't it obvious to anyone that he's "Phaestus" with an eta dragged in?
Hermogenes: It's liable to be, unless *you*'re liable to get yet another opinion into you somehow, which seems likely.
Socrates: Well, to avoid the risk of that opinion, ask about Ares.
Hermogenes: I so ask.

45 *Pallein* (brandish) was the standard etymology of Pallas. Athena is interpreted below as *ha theonoa*, from *theou noêsis* (active intelligence of a divine being), or *ta thea noousa* (one with intelligence about divine things), or *en tô êthei noêsis* (active intelligence in one's character).

46 Hephaestus is interpreted as *phaeos histôr* (one skilled with light); Ares is equated with *to arren* (the masculine), *to andreion* (the brave), and *to arraton* (the tough).

D *Socrates*: Well then, if you want that, "Ares" would be from *masculinity* and *bravery*, or else it might be for his hard and inflexible quality, exactly what's called *toughness*, and for this it would be fitting in every way for a warlike god to be called "Ares."

Hermogenes: Very much so.

Socrates: Let's get off the gods, for the gods' sake, since I'm nervous about discussing them; toss out any other subjects you want for me, though, "so you can see what kind of horses" Euthyphro's got.[47]

E *Hermogenes*: I *will* do that, at least when I've asked you one more, about Hermes, since Cratylus says I'm no Hermogenes.[48] So let's try to consider what the name intends, so we can see whether there's anything in what this fellow here says.

Socrates: But surely this name "Hermes" looks like it's something to do with speech, something that's *interpretive* and carries messages,

408A while it's also thievish and deceptive in words and adapted to the marketplace, and all that business involves the power of speech. Now that's exactly what we were saying in the earlier discussion, that *discoursing* is a use of speech, and then there's something Homer says in many places, "he wrought," which is to contrive. So from the two of these together, speaking and the one who has wrought the speech, speaking being discoursing, it's just as if the

B lawgiver is giving us an injunction about this god, saying "Human beings, he who *wrought discoursing* would justly be called by you 'Eiremes.'" But nowadays we call him "Hermes," imagining that we're prettying up the name.

Hermogenes: By Zeus, it seems to me Cratylus had a good point after all in saying I'm not a Hermogenes; I'm not a skilled contriver of speech anyway.

Socrates: And it does have some likelihood, my friend, for Pan to be the dual-natured son of Hermes.

C *Hermogenes*: How so?

Socrates: You know that speech signifies all, circulates all, and keeps all constantly in motion, and also that it is twofold, true and false.

Hermogenes: By *all* means.

Socrates: Well, then, the true part of it is smooth and divine, dwelling above among the gods, while the false part is below among the multitude of human beings, and is shaggy and goatish; for this is

47 The quotation is from the *Iliad*, V, 221 and VIII, 105. A modern automotive equivalent might be "so you can see how many horses he's got under the hood." Socrates continues to attribute his "inspired" explanations to Euthyphro's influence.

48 See 383 B. Socrates now equates Hermes with *eirein mêsasthai*, to have wrought discoursing.

where most of the legends and falsehoods are, in life as represented in tragedy.[49]

Hermogenes: By all means.

Socrates: Therefore the one who reveals *all* and *keeps it constantly in motion* would rightly be "Pan the goatherd," the dual-natured son **D**
of Hermes, smooth in his upper parts but rough and goat-like in his lower ones. And Pan either *is* speech or is speech's brother, if he's Hermes' son, and for brother to be like brother is nothing to be wondered at. But as I was saying, you blessed fellow, let's get off the gods.

Hermogenes: *That* sort of gods, anyway, Socrates, if you want to. But what would stop you from going over *this* sort: the sun, moon, stars, earth, ether, air, fire, water, the seasons, and the year? **E**

Socrates: You're loading a lot on me; all the same, though, if it will be a source of gratification to you, I'm willing.

Hermogenes: I'll be most gratified.

Socrates: So which one do you want first? Just as you mentioned them, do we go over the sun first?

Hermogenes: By all means.

Socrates: Well, then, it looks like it would become clear if one were **409A**
to use the Doric name instead, since the Dorians call it "Halios." Now "Halios" could be derived from his *assembling* human beings together when he rises, but it could also be for his *revolving as he goes* constantly around the earth, or likely, too, because as he goes he embellishes the colors of the things that come from the earth, and to embellish colors is the same thing as *to make something shimmer*.[50]

Hermogenes: And what about the moon?

Socrates: This name appears to be embarrassing for Anaxagoras.

Hermogenes: In what respect?

Socrates: It looks like it shows that what that thinker was saying as something new was more ancient, namely that the moon gets her **B**
light from the sun.

Hermogenes: How so?

Socrates: No doubt *a beam* is the same thing as light.

Hermogenes: Yes.

49 Tragedies originated out of satyr-plays, and the word for tragedy meant goat-song. Pan was depicted with an appearance similar to that of a satyr, His name has already been identified with *pan* (all), which Hermogenes appears to be playing on in his replies here (*panu ye*), and Pan's nickname "goatherd" (*aipolos*) is equated with "the one who keeps things constantly in motion" (*aei polôn*) as a tenuous link with speech and through that with his father Hermes.

50 The sun (*hêlios*) is equated with *halizein* (assembling), *heilein iôn* (revolving as he goes), and *aiolein* (to cause to shift color).

Socrates: And no doubt this light of the moon is always new and old,[51] if the Anaxagoreans are telling the truth, since in constantly going around her he's always casting new light on her, while the old light of the previous month is no doubt still present.

Hermogenes: Quite so.

Socrates: And lots of people call her "Selanaia."

Hermogenes: Quite so.

C *Socrates*: Due to the fact that it always has *a new and an old beam* the most just name it could be called would be "Selaënoneoeia," but it's been hammered down and pronounced "Selanaia."

Hermogenes: Quite a rhapsodizer of a name that is, Socrates; but how do you account for the month and the stars?

Socrates: The month, from its *waning*, would rightly be called a "diminith," and it seems likely that the stars get their name from a *lightning-flash*; and the "lightning-flash," because it *turns the eyes up*, would be called "anastropê," but nowadays we pretty it up and it's called "astrapê."[52]

Hermogenes: What about fire and water?

D *Socrates*: I'm at a loss about fire. Euthyphro's muse is liable to have left me helpless, or else this is just a superhard word. So observe the contrivance I bring in for all such cases I'm stumped about.

Hermogenes: What's that?

Socrates: I'll tell you. Just answer me: would *you* have anything to say about the way fire gets called that?

Hermogenes: By Zeus, *I* wouldn't.

E *Socrates*: So consider a suspicion I have about it. I'm thinking that many Greeks, and especially those living under barbarian rule, have taken over names of different origins.

Hermogenes: What about it?

Socrates: If anyone tried to investigate them as though they made sense as applied from the Greek language, and not from the language the name happens to come from, you know he'd be out of luck.

Hermogenes: Likely so.

410A *Socrates*: Well then, take a look at this word "fire" and see whether it might not be a barbarian one. Because it's not easy to connect it with a Greek dialect, and there are obviously Phrygians who call it that with a little deviation, as with "water" and "dogs" and many other words.

Hermogenes: There *are* these cases.

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51 The day of the new moon was called the day of the "old and new," when the moonlight of one month ended and was replaced by that of the next. The moon (*selênê*) is equated with *selas neon kai enon* (a new and an old light-beam).

52 The month (*meis*) is equated with waning (*meiousthai*), and hence more rightly called *meiês*, rendered "diminith" to capture something of Socrates' playfulness; stars (*astra*) are equated with a lightning-flash (*astrapê*), and that in turn with turning up (*anastrephein*) the eyes.

Socrates: So while one ought not to force this explanation, one might still say it about *them*, and by this means I dispose of fire and **B**
water. As for air,[53] though, Hermogenes, is it called "air" because it *lifts* things from the earth, or because it's *constantly flowing*, or is it because wind comes about from its flow? For the poets surely call the winds "gusts," and maybe "air" means *flowing gust*, as if one had said "flowing wind." And I get at the ether in the following way: because as it flows it's *constantly running* around the *air*, it would justly be called "ethair." And as for earth, it indicates what it means better if one uses the name "Gaia," since a *female progenitor* could **C**
rightly be called "Gaia," as Homer says, because he uses the word *gegaasin* for being born. Okay; now what was your next one?

Hermogenes: The seasons, Socrates, and the annual cycle or year.

Socrates: The seasons ought to be pronounced in the Attic dialect, ancient-style, if you want to know the likely meaning, because "hêorai"[54] are there to divide winters and summers, and winds, and the produce of the earth, and they'd justly be called *boundaries*. The annual cycle and year are likely to be one particular meaning. **D**
For that which brings forth into the light the things that grow and come into being, each in its turn, and reviews them itself, within itself, is that which some call the "annual cycle," because it's *within itself*, and others call the "year," because it *reviews*; just as in the earlier case, the name of Zeus was divided in two, with some calling him "Zena" and others "Dia," it's that way here too. And the whole formulation is "what reviews within itself," this being one thing addressed in two parts, so that the two names, "annual cycle" and "year," have come out of one formulation. **E**

Hermogenes: My, but you're getting way ahead, Socrates.

Socrates: I suppose I do appear to be whipping along far into wisdom by now.

Hermogenes: Very far indeed.

Socrates: You'll say so even more soon.

Hermogenes: Well after this form, I'd be pleased to see by what sort of **411A**
rightness those beautiful words that pertain to virtue are applied, such as "good sense," "understanding," "justice," and all the rest like that.

53 Air (*aêr*) is equated with *airein* (to lift), *aei rhein* (constantly flowing), and *aêtorrous* (flowing gust); ether (*aeithêr*) with *aei thei (peri ton) aera* (constantly runs around the air); and earth (*gê*) with *gennêteira* (female progenitor).

54 Seasons (*hôrai*) get the omega changed to omicron in ancient Attic to be equated with *horai* (boundaries); the year (*etos*) is taken as coming from *etazein* (to review), and its synonym "annual cycle" (*eniautos*) from *en heautô* (within itself).

Socrates: That's no trifling tribe of words you're stirring up, my friend. All the same, seeing as how I've arrayed myself in the lion's skin,[55] it wouldn't be right to wimp out, but the thing to do, it seems, is to examine good sense, understanding, judgment, knowledge and
B the rest of these beautiful words you invoke.

Hermogenes: It's of the utmost necessity that we not quit before that's done.

Socrates: And by the dog, it seems to me I'm getting an inkling that's not bad—it's coming to me even as we speak—a notion that, more than anything, those very ancient human beings who established names were just like a lot of our wise people today who get dizzy from turning around repeatedly in circles while searching for the way things are, and then it appears to them that the *things* are turn-
C ing around and shifting in every way. So they ascribe the cause of this opinion not to an internal experience of their own, but to the things themselves, as being that way by nature, none of them being still or stable but being in flux and shifting and constantly filled with motion and generation of every sort. I say this because I got the notion from all the names that just came up.

Hermogenes: How's that exactly, Socrates?

Socrates: Maybe you didn't notice that the names mentioned just now are applied to absolutely all of them as though they're in motion and flux and in a state of becoming.

Hermogenes: I wasn't thinking that at all.

D *Socrates*: Well first of all, this first one we spoke of is absolutely applied on grounds like that.

Hermogenes: What's that?

Socrates: Good sense,[56] because it's *intelligence about motion and flux*. Or it might be possible to take it as *getting benefit out of motion*, but it's about being in motion anyway. And judgment, if you want, absolutely indicates consideration or *observation of generation*, because observing and considering are the same. And, if you want, intelligence is just a *tendency toward what's new*, while the being-new of
E things signifies that they're in a constant state of becoming; and the one who established the name indicates the soul's tending in this

55 One of the twelve labors of Heracles was to bring back the skin of the monstrous Nemean lion. Socrates' oath "by the dog" in his next speech confirms that he has Heracles in mind (see note to *Hippias Major*, 287E), and suggests that the divisions in this dialogue may be playfully intended as a series of Herculean labors.

56 Good sense (*phronêsis*) is equated with *phoras kai rou noêsis* (intelligence about motion and flux) or *onêsis phoras* (getting benefit out of motion), judgment (*gnômê*) with *gonês nômêsis* (observation of generation), intelligence (*noêsis*) with *to neou esis* (tendency for what's new), moderation (*sôphrosunê*) with *sôtêria phronêseôs* (preservation of good sense), knowledge (*epistêmê*) with *hepesthai* (following), understanding (*sunesis*) with *sunienai* (to go or get with), wisdom (*sophia*) with *sou epaphê* (grasping darting motion), and the good (*to agathon*) with *to agaston tou thoou* (the admirable, i.e. the swift). Note that *tou thoou* in the last phrase is a genitive of explanation.

direction as "neo-esis," because it wasn't called "noêsis" in ancient times, but one had to pronounce two epsilons instead of the eta, namely "noeësis." And moderation is the *preservation* of what we were just examining, *good sense*. And "knowledge" surely indicates **412A**
that any soul worth speaking of *follows* things that are in motion and doesn't lag behind or run ahead; hence one should really insert an epsilon and pronounce it "epeïstêmê." Next, understanding, in the same way, would seem to be just like inference, and when one speaks of understanding, it turns out that absolutely the same thing as knowing is meant, because *to get with it* means for the soul to go **B**
along with things. And wisdom surely signifies grasping motion, though this word is rather murky and somewhat foreign. One just has to recall from the poets what they say in many places about anything that happens to be in the class of things that start rapidly advancing: they say it *darted*. And a Spartan man, a distinguished one, had the name "Sous," for that's what the Spartans call a rapid darting action. So wisdom signifies *grasping* this motion, on the **C**
grounds that things are in motion. And as for the name "good," surely this is meant to apply to what's *admirable* in all nature. For although the things are moving around, there is after all rapidity in some and slowness in others. So it's not everything that's rapid, but only the admirable part of it. And to *the admirable, namely the swift*, this name "the good" is given.

As for justice,[57] it's easy to make the connection that this name is applied to the *understanding of what's just*, but what "just" itself means is troublesome. Then too, it looks like there's agreement among most people up to a point, but dispute beyond it. For those **D**
who regard the whole as being in motion take the greater part of it to be some sort of thing that does nothing but provide space, while there's something else that passes through all this, by means of which everything in a state of becoming comes to be. And this latter thing is exceedingly rapid and of an exceedingly rarefied texture, since otherwise it would not be capable of going through everything there is, if it weren't so utterly rarefied that nothing could keep it out, and so utterly rapid as to behave as though everything else was standing still. So because it governs all other things by **E**
passing through them it's rightly called by this name "just," taking on the force of the kappa to make it easy on the tongue. Up to this point, then, as we were just saying, it's agreed among most people that this is what the just is. I, however, Hermogenes, being relent- **413A**

57 The human virtue justice (*dikaiosunê*) is taken as *tou dikaiou sunesis* (understanding of what's just), and the just itself (*to dikaion*) as *diaïon* (that which passes through); since this all-pervasive element is the highest cause, it also accounts, in secret, for the version of Zeus's name of which the accusative is *Dia*, and the succeeding divergent accounts of this highest cause as the sun, fire itself, or heat itself finally give us *dikaion* = *diaion* + *kaon* (that which passes through and burns).

less about it, have kept learning about all these matters in secret discussions, and learned that this is the *cause* as well as the just—for that by means of which things come to be is their cause—and someone told me that this is why it's right to call Zeus "Dia." But when I patiently followed up after hearing these things by asking each of them nonetheless, "So, most excellent man, if this is the way things are, what in the world *is* the just?" it seems that I had already asked something that went too far, and that I had jumped
B out of bounds. They say I've inquired far enough, and wanting to give me my fill, they try to do so, different ones from that point on saying different things, and they're no longer in accord. One in particular says this is the just: the sun. That's because this alone governs the things there are by *passing through and burning* them. So when I tell that to someone, delighted to have heard something beautiful, this fellow laughs at me when he hears it, and asks if I
C imagine there's nothing just among human beings when the sun goes down. So when I pester him for what he claims instead, he says fire itself. But this is not easy to understand. Another says it's not fire itself but the heat itself that's *in* the fire. Another says he finds all these things laughable, and that the just is what Anaxagoras says it is, intellect; for because this is its own ruler and mixed with nothing, he says it orders all things by passing through them all. So at this point, dear friend, I'm in much more of a quandary than
D I was before trying to learn about what the just is. But as far as the thing we were looking into is concerned, its *name*, this appears to be applied to it for these reasons.

Hermogenes: It appears to me, Socrates, that these are things you've heard from someone and not things you're tossing out on your own.

Socrates: What about the others?

Hermogenes: Those not at all.

Socrates: Listen, then, because I might possibly be tricking you about whether I'm also speaking of the remaining things without having heard about them. What do we have left after justice? I don't think
E we've gone over courage yet. As for injustice, it's obvious what it is, an obstruction to what passes through, but the word "courage" signifies that it got its name from *manliness*[58] in battle—and for there to be a battle in what *is*, if that's in flux, would be nothing other than to have an *opposing flow*. If, then, one takes the delta out of the name of courage, the name "anreia" signifies that very act. Now it's obvious that every flow opposed to another flow is not

58 Manliness is simply the word used for courage (*andreia*), equated here with *anreia* (opposing flow); male (*arren*) and man (*anêr*) are equated with an *anô rhoê* (upward flow), woman (*gunê*) with childbirth (*gonê*), female (*thêlu*) with nipple (*thêlê*), that in turn with *tethêlenai* (be in a flourishing state), and the root of that (*thallein*, flourish) in turn with *thein* plus *hallesthai* (running and jumping).

courage, but only one opposed to what flows counter to what's just, since otherwise courage would not be praised. And "male" and "man" are named for something just about like that, an *upward flow*, while "woman" appears to me to be tending toward *childbirth* and "female" appears to get its name from the *nipple*. And isn't the "nipple" called that, Hermogenes, because it puts things in *a flourishing state* just like watered plants? **414A**

Hermogenes: That does seem likely, Socrates.

Socrates: And the word "flourish" itself seems to me to capture the very image of the growth of the young that comes so rapidly and suddenly. Just that sort of thing is replicated in the name, since it fits together *running and jumping*. But you're not noticing that I'm getting carried away, right outside the racetrack, when I get onto smooth ground. But we still have plenty of things left that seem to be serious. **B**

Hermogenes: You're telling the truth.

Socrates: One of them is to see what in the world "art" is meant to be.

Hermogenes: Quite so.

Socrates: Doesn't this signify an *active condition of intellect*,[59] to someone who takes out the tau, and inserts omicron between the chi and the nu, and the nu and the eta? **C**

Hermogenes: In a very tacky sort of way, Socrates.

Socrates: You blessed fellow, you don't realize that the first names that were given have by now been covered over by people who want to turn them into tragic poetry, putting in and taking out letters to make them easy on the tongue and twisting them every which way, so that they're buried under prettification and under time. In "kataptron,"[60] for instance, doesn't the inserting of the rho seem absurd to you? But I imagine the people who do that sort of thing have no respect for truth, but only for shaping their mouths, so they keep making lots of insertions into the first names until they end up making it so that no single human being can understand what in the world the names mean. It's the same way people call the Sphinx "Sphinx" and not "Phix," and many other examples. **D**

Hermogenes: There are these cases like that, Socrates.

59 Art (*technê*) is contorted into *hexis nou* (active condition of intellect). Hermogenes calls this "tacky" (*glischron*) in contrast to the smooth progress of Socrates' preceding explanations. It may be worth noting that Aristotle calls *technê* a *hexis meta logou poiêtikê* (an active condition involving reasoning and governing making) in *Nicomachean Ethics* Bk. VI, Chap. 4.

60 *Katoptron* (mirror) is made from the same pieces as *katopton* (visible) and *katoptês* (spy). The verb meaning "strangle" (*sphiggein*) was at some point superimposed on the original name of the Sphinx. Another example here might be the way the name Clytemestra became Clytemnestra, because the latter was easier to say.

Socrates: But if one is going to allow putting in and taking out whatever one pleases in names, the way will be wide open for anyone to fit any name to any thing.

E *Hermogenes*: What you say is true.

Socrates: True indeed. But I imagine that you, as a wise supervisor, need to watch out for what's measured and likely.

Hermogenes: I'd want to.

415A *Socrates*: And I share your desire, Hermogenes. But don't be too strict about it, you strange fellow, "lest you incapacitate me of my strength."[61] For I'm coming to the pinnacle of the things I've spoken of, once we take a look at "contrivance" along with art. Now a "contrivance" seems to me to be a sign of *getting a lot done*, since "a lot" is a way of signifying "size," and the name "contrivance" is compounded of this pair together, "size" and "getting something done." But as I was just saying, it's necessary to come to the pinnacle of the things that have been spoken of, for what is intended **B** by the names "virtue" and "badness" needs to be investigated. One of the two I don't yet have in sight, but the other one seems to me to be clear, since it's in accord with everything that's gone before. For inasmuch as things are *going*, everything that's going *badly* would be an instance of "badness," but what going-badly is in the case of *things*, when it's in a soul, has the general name in the special sense of "vice."[62] As for what going-badly is, it seems to me to be evident in "cowardice," which we haven't gone over yet, but **C** passed over, though we ought to have examined it after courage; we seem to me to have passed over a lot of other things as well. Now cowardice in a soul signifies something's being a strong set of chains, since "exceedingly" is sort of like "strong." So the *exceedingly* greatest *set of chains* on the soul would be cowardice, just as being at a loss is also a vice, as is, it seems, everything that is an obstruction to going on and making progress. This, then, appears to make it evident that "going badly" is proceeding haltingly and in an obstructed manner, so when the soul is in that condition it becomes filled with vice. And if "vice" is the name applied to that sort of thing, "virtue" would be the opposite of that, signifying first **D** of all an ease of proceeding, and next that a free-flowing condition always belongs to a good soul; and so it seems likely that what is *constantly flowing* in an unchecked and unobstructed manner has gotten this name given to it, and while it would be right to call it "aeireitên," it's been condensed and called "aretê." Now maybe

61 *Iliad* VI, 265. Contrivance (*mêchanê*) is equated with *mêkos anein* (getting a sizable amount done).

62 *Kakia* (badness in general, or vice, i.e. badness of character) is taken as *kakôs ienai* (going badly), *deilia* (cowardice) as *desmos lian* (an exceeding set of chains), *aretê* (virtue) as *aei rheon* (what's constantly flowing), and *aischron* (shameful, ugly) as *aei ischon ton rhoun* (what constantly hinders flowing).

you'll claim this is another case of my making something up, but I claim that if what I said before about "vice" is right, I've got this name "virtue" right too. **E**

Hermogenes: But the name "bad," on the basis of which you said a lot of what went before, what does it intend? **416A**

Socrates: To *me* it seems connected with something pretty out-of-the-way, by Zeus, and troublesome. So for this one again I bring in that contrivance of mine.

Hermogenes: What sort of contrivance is that?

Socrates: The one of claiming this too is something of barbarian origin.

Hermogenes: And it does look like you're saying so rightly. But if it seems okay, let's let that go, and try to see in what sense "beautiful" and "shameful" are reasonably named.

Socrates: Well, what "shameful" intends also appears clear to me, since this too is in agreement with the earlier things. For the one who established names appears to me through and through to rail against what obstructs and hinders things from flowing, and in this case he gave *what constantly hinders flowing* this name "aeischoroun," which people have condensed and call "aischron." **B**

Hermogenes: What about "beautiful"?

Socrates: That's more trouble to get a notion of. It does mean something, though; only it's been altered in the pitch accent and length of the omicron.

Hermogenes: How so?

Socrates: This word seems likely to be a name for the thinking power.

Hermogenes: How do you mean?

Socrates: Well, come on; what do you imagine is responsible for each thing's being called what it is? Isn't it that which established the names? **C**

Hermogenes: Absolutely; no doubt about it.

Socrates: And wouldn't that be a power of thinking, either of gods or of human beings, or both?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: And isn't that which continues to call things by name the same power that once called them by name, namely thinking?

Hermogenes: It appears so.

Socrates: And aren't all those works done by intellect and thinking praiseworthy, and those not done by them blameworthy?

Hermogenes: Very much so.

Socrates: And doesn't the medical power produce medical works, and carpentry produce works of carpentry? Or how would you put it? **D**

Hermogenes: I'd put it that way.

Socrates: So therefore *what calls things by name* produces *beautiful* works?[63]

Hermogenes: That has to follow.

Socrates: And this, as we're claiming, is the thinking power?

Hermogenes: Very much so.

Socrates: Therefore this given name "beautiful" rightly belongs to the good sense that performs the sort of works that we greet with delight when we declare them beautiful.

Hermogenes: It appears so.

E *Socrates*: So what do we still have left of that sort of thing?

Hermogenes: Those things that surround what's good and beautiful,

417A that are advantageous, profitable, beneficial, and rewarding, as well as their opposites.

Socrates: Well, by now you could no doubt discover "advantageous" from the things examined before, since it appears as a sort of brother of knowledge. For it indicates nothing other than the *moving together* of the soul with things, and it's fitting for things done by such an activity to be called "advantageous" and "fortunate," from

B *being carried around together*. Now "rewarding" is from gain, and by putting a nu back in the word "kerdos" in place of the delta, one makes evident what it means, since it's another way of naming the good. Because it *mixes* into everything by going through it, the one who gave it its name named it after this power it has, and by inserting a delta in place of the nu, he pronounced it "kerdos."

Hermogenes: And "profitable"—what about that?

Socrates: It doesn't seem likely that it's the way retailers use it, when

C it frees up their cost outlay; the "profitable" thing doesn't seem to me to have its meaning in that sense, but to mean that by being the fastest thing there is, it doesn't let things stand still, or let the motion get to an *end* of being moved so as to stop and halt. Instead, it constantly *frees up* the motion if anything tries to come to an end, and renders it ceaseless and undying; it's in this sense, it seems to me, that what's good is proclaimed "profitable," because what *frees up the end* of motion is called "lusiteloun." But "beneficial" is a foreign word, one that Homer too has used in many places for "multiplying," that is, as a name for increasing and being productive.

D *Hermogenes*: And how does it go for us with their opposites?

Socrates: Well, it doesn't seem to me there's any need to go over those that are their negatives.

Hermogenes: Which are those?

63 *Kalon* (beautiful) is equated with *kaloun* (what calls by name), *sumpheron* (advantageous) with *sumperipheresthai* (being carried around together), *kerdaleon* (rewarding) with *kerannutai* (it mixes), *lusiteloun* (profitable) with *luon to telos* (what frees up the end), *ôphelimon* (beneficial) with *ophellein* (multiplying), and *blaberon* (harmful) with *boulomenon haptein rhoun* (what tends to fasten the flow).

Socrates: Disadvantageous, nonbeneficial, unprofitable, and unrewarding.
Hermogenes: That's true, as you say.
Socrates: But then there are "harmful" and "damaging."
Hermogenes: Yes.
Socrates: Now "harmful" means to be something that *disables the flow*; what disables, in turn, signifies what *tends to fasten*, and to "fasten" is the same as to *bind* which is in every case is condemned. So *what tends to fasten the flow* would most rightly be "boulapteroun," which appears to me to have been prettied up and called "blaberoun." **E**
Hermogenes: Fancy names do roll off your tongue, Socrates. Why, just now when you were enunciating that word "boulapteroun," you looked to me as if you were pursing your lips for the flute prelude of the hymn to Athena. **418A**
Socrates: I'm not to blame, Hermogenes; it's those who established the name.
Hermogenes: What you say is true; but what would "damaging" be?
Socrates: What would "damaging" be, indeed. You see, Hermogenes, how truly I spoke when I said that people greatly alter the thought in words by adding and subtracting letters, so much so that by tweaking something ever so slightly, they sometimes make it mean the opposite. In the case of "duty" for instance, because I just thought of it; I was reminded of it by what I was about to say to you, that this beautiful new dialect of ours has twisted "damaging" around to mean its opposite, and "duty" too, erasing what they intend, while the old dialect in both cases makes evident what the name means. **B**
Hermogenes: How do you mean?
Socrates: I'll tell you. You know that our elders made very good use of iota and delta, and not least among them the women, who are especially prone to preserving the original dialect. But nowadays instead of iota people turn it into epsilon or eta, and zeta instead of delta, as being more imposing. **C**
Hermogenes: How so?
Socrates: For example, the most ancient people called day "himera" or in some cases "hemera," but now people say "hêmera."
Hermogenes: That's so.
Socrates: And do you realize that of these, only the ancient name makes evident the thought of the one who established it? For the reason they named it "day" was that daylight came from the darkness to human beings who welcome it gladly and are *yearning* for it.[64] **D**
Hermogenes: So it appears.

64 *Hêmera* (day) is equated with *himeirein* (yearning); "tame" has the same letters as "day," with the accent on the first instead of the second syllable. *Zugon* (yoke), by way of *duogon*, is equated with *duoin agôgên* (for a pair for pulling).

Socrates: But now that it's been done up in tragic costume, you couldn't even get a notion of what "day" intends. What's more, there are some people who imagine that day makes things *tame*, and that's why it's named that way.

Hermogenes: I do believe there are.

Socrates: And you do know that the ancients called a yoke a coupling?

Hermogenes: Very apt.

E *Socrates*: And while "yoke" makes nothing evident, "coupling" is justly given as a name for a binding of a *pair* for *pulling*: but now we've got "yoke." And a vast number of other names are that way.

Hermogenes: It appears so.

Socrates: So in the same manner, "duty," when it's said in that way, at first signifies the opposite of all the other names that have to do with what's good. For even though it is an aspect of the good, duty has the appearance of being a set of chains and an impediment to motion, as if it were a brother to what's harmful.

Hermogenes: That's exactly the way it appears, Socrates.

419A *Socrates*: But not if you use its ancient name, which is much more likely to be the right way to refer to it than the current one; it, rather, is in agreement with the preceding instances of the good, if you give it an iota in the ancient style instead of an epsilon. For then *what goes through*,[65] not "what chains up," signifies what's good, and that's exactly what one approves of. And thus the one who established names is not in opposition himself with himself, but "duty," "beneficial," "profitable," "rewarding," "good," "advantageous," and "well off" present the same appearance, signifying in different

B words the source of order and motion that is everywhere praised, while the source of hindering and chaining up is condemned. And with "damaging" too, if in accord with the ancient dialect you put back a delta in place of the zeta, it will be apparent to you that the name is applied to what *chains up the moving thing*, pronounced "dêmiôdes."

Hermogenes: And what about "pleasure" and "pain" and "desire" and things like that, Socrates?

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65 *Deon* (duty) is equated with *diïon* (what goes through), *zêmiôdes* (damaging) with *doun to ion* (what chains up the moving thing), *hêdonê* (pleasure) with *onêsin* (for benefit), *lupê* (pain) with *dialusis pathê* (dissolution afflictions), *ania* (distress) with *anienai* (anti-moving), *algêdôn* (suffering) with *to algeinon* (a grievous thing), *odunê* (grief) with *endusis* (taking on), *achthêdôn* (vexation) with *achthos* (burden), *chara* (joy) with *diachusis rhoês* (outpouring of flow), *terpnon* (delightful) with *herpsis pnoê* (spreading sinuously like a vapor), *euphrosunê* (good cheer) with *eu sumpheresthai* (comporting well), *epithumia* (desire) with *epi ton thumon ienai* (going up to passion), *thumos* (passion) with *thusis* (raging), *himeros* (craving) with *hiemenos rhein kai ephiemenos* (to flow gushing and aiming), *pothos* (yearning) with *allothi pou ontos* (for something that is somewhere else), and *erôs* (love) with *esrein* (inflowing).

Socrates: There doesn't appear to me to be any trouble at all about them, Hermogenes. For "pleasure" looks like it has that name as the action tending toward *benefit*—but the delta is inserted, so it's called "hêdonê" instead of "hêonê." And "pain" looks like it's **C** given its name from the bodily *dissolution* which grips the body in this *affliction*. And "distress" is what impedes *moving*, but "suffering" appears to me to be a foreign word that gets its name from what's *grievous*. "Grief" looks like it's called that from the *taking on* of pain, and it's obvious to anyone that the name "vexation" is made in the image of a weight encumbering motion. Now "joy" looks like it's called that from the *outpouring* and easy passage of the *flow* of the soul. "Delight" is from what's *delightful*, while **D** "delightful" is called that from *spreading sinuously* through the soul in the image of a *vapor*; in justice it would be called "herpnoun," but it's been altered in the course of time to "terpnon." The origin of "good cheer" needs no explaining, since it's obvious to anyone that it gets this name from the soul's *comporting well* with things; "eupherosunê" is justly its name, but all the same we call it "euphrosunê." And "desire" is no trouble either, since it's obvious that it's called by this name for the power that *goes up to passion*, while **E** "passion" has that name from the *raging* and seething of the soul. And surely "craving" was given its name for the current that pulls the soul most strongly; for because it *flows gushing* and *aiming* at **420A** things and hence violently drives the soul on by the impetuosity of its flow, from all this power it gets called "craving." "Yearning," in turn, is called that to signify that it's not for something present, but for *something that is somewhere else*, namely absent, and so what is sometimes given the name "yearning" is called "craving" whenever the thing one desires is present, but once it becomes absent this same thing is called "yearning." As for "love," because it's an *influx from outside* and this flow is not a property of the one who has **B** it but introduced through the eyes, it was for these reasons called "esros" in ancient times, from the inflowing—we used to use an omicron instead of an omega—but now it's called "erôs" because of the replacement of the omicron with an omega. So what more do you say we should take a look at?

Hermogenes: Opinion, and that sort of thing; how does that appear to you?

Socrates: "Opinion" gets its name either for *pursuing*,[66] in the sense that the soul goes in pursuit of knowing how it stands with things, or

66 *Doxa* (opinion) is equated tentatively with *diôxis* (pursuing), and then more confidently with *toxon* (bow), to accord with the connection of *oiêsis* (supposition) with *oisis* (being carried, motion), and *boulê* (plan), *boulesthai* (wanting), and *bouleuesthai* (deliberating) with *bolê* (shot), in the sense of aiming a bow-shot at something, as well as of *aboulia* (ill-advisedness) with *atuchia* (missing). *Ekousion* (voluntary) is equated with *to eikon* (what yields), and *anagkê* (necessity) with *agkê* (gullies).

C else it's for a shot from a *bow*. The latter looks more likely; at least "supposition" is in accord with that, since it seems like an indicator of a *motion* of the soul toward all things to get at what each of the beings is like, the same way that a "plan" is a sort of *shot* and "wanting" and "deliberating" signify aiming at something. All these various words appear to go along with opinion and to be made in the image of taking a *shot*, just as the opposite, "ill-advisedness," on its side, seems to be a *missing*, as if on the part of someone who doesn't shoot or hit what he shot at or wanted or deliberated about or aimed at.

D *Hermogenes*: You seem to me to be bringing on the onslaught thick and fast now, Socrates.

Socrates: That's because I'm already running the last stretch. But I still want to go over "necessity," because it's next to these in order, and also what's "voluntary." Now what's indicated by this name "voluntary" would be what yields and doesn't push back, but as I'm saying, just *yields* to what's in motion and happens in accord with one's wish; but what's "necessary" and recalcitrant, being contrary to one's wish, would be involved in error and ignorance, and

E presents the image of a passage along a *gully*, because they're hard to traverse and rough going, and hinder motion because they're full of underbrush. So that's probably the source of its being called "necessity," capturing the image of a passage through gullies. But let's not waste this mighty power as long as it's present, and don't *you* slacken your effort either, but keep asking.

421A *Hermogenes*: Then I ask about the greatest and most beautiful things, the true, the false, and being, and why the very thing to which our present speech is directed, a name, has *its* name.

Socrates: Then is there something you call *questing*?

Hermogenes: There is indeed: inquiring.

Socrates: Well, it looks like "name" is a name that's been hammered down from a sentence, saying "this is a being about which there's an inquiry." You might recognize it better in the way we say "a thing named," since there it clearly says "this is a *being for which*

B *there's a quest*."[67] As for "truth," this one looks like the others, since the divine motion of being seems to be addressed in this word "alêtheia," as being a *divine wandering*. But what's "false" is the opposite of motion, for once again what is restrained and forced to be quiet is condemned and likened to those who are *asleep*, though the addition of the psi conceals the intention of the name. "Being" in the sense of being-ness is in agreement with the true, with an

C iota removed, since it signifies something *going*, and "not being"

67 *Onoma* (name) is equated, through *onomaston* (thing named), with *on hou masma estin* (a being for which there's a quest), *alêtheia* (truth) with *alê theia* (divine wandering), *to pseudos* (the false) with *kath-eudos* (one who is asleep), and *on* and *ouk on* (being and not-being) with *ion* and *ouk ion* (going and not going).

in turn signifies something *not going*, which is even the way some people pronounce it.

Hermogenes: You seem to me to have hammered away at these words in a thoroughly manly way, Socrates, but if someone were to ask you about this "going," or about "flowing" or "chaining," what sort of rightness these words have—

Socrates: "What would you answer him?" That's what you're saying, right?

Hermogenes: Exactly.

Socrates: Well, a little while ago we provided one way for us to answer, presumably, so that we'd seem to be saying something.

Hermogenes: What sort of way was that?

Socrates: To claim that something we don't recognize is of barbarian **D** origin. Now that sort of thing might be something like the truth about them, but it could also be that the original names are undiscoverable because they're so ancient; for since names get distorted in every way, it's nothing to wonder at if our ancient dialect is no different from a present-day barbarian one.

Hermogenes: And there's nothing out-of-the-way in what you're saying.

Socrates: Because I'm only saying what's likely. However, it doesn't seem to me that bringing in excuses is acceptable; the thing to do is just make a whole-hearted effort to examine them. But we have to take it to heart that if someone is going to keep constantly asking for the former words by means of which names are spoken, and **E** again in turn inquires after the words by means of which *they* had been spoken, and doesn't stop doing that, isn't it necessary for the one asking the questions finally to give up?

Hermogenes: It seems that way to me.

Socrates: And by giving up at what point would the one who renounces **422A** the inquiry justly stop? Wouldn't it be when he gets to those names which are, so to speak, the elements of the other words and names? For presumably, if that's the way they are, there's no longer any justice in making *them* appear to be put together out of other names. For instance, we were claiming just now that "good" is put together out of "admirable" and "swift," and maybe we could say "swift" is from different names and those from still others, but if **B** we ever get hold of something that's no longer put together out of any other names, we could justly claim to be at that point at an element, and that there was no longer any need to trace *that* back to other names.

Hermogenes: You seem to me to be speaking rightly.

Socrates: So are these names you're now asking about also precisely elements, and for them is it necessary to investigate whatever rightness they have from that point on in some other way?

Hermogenes: Likely so.

Socrates: Likely indeed, Hermogenes; at any rate, all the preceding
C words appear to come back to them. But if that's how it is, and it seems to me it is, here again you have to join the investigation with me so that I don't lapse into any nonsense in stating what sort of rightness there must be in the original names.

Hermogenes: Just speak on, and I'll join the investigation with as much power as there is in me.

Socrates: Well, I imagine it seems to you too that there's some one kind of rightness for every name, first or last, and that, as far as being a name is concerned, none of them is any different from another.

Hermogenes: Quite so.

D *Socrates*: But surely any rightness there was meant to be in the names we've now gone over was of such a sort as to make evident what each of the things there are is like.

Hermogenes: How could it be anything else?

Socrates: Therefore, this is something the original ones need to have no less than the later ones, if they're going to be names.

Hermogenes: Quite so.

Socrates: But it looks like the later ones were able to accomplish this by means of the prior ones.

Hermogenes: It appears so.

Socrates: Okay; but then the original ones, which no longer have any others underlying them, if they're going to be names, in what
E manner are *they*, as much as is possible, going to make the things there are as clear to us as they can be? Answer me this: if we had no voice or tongue, and we wanted to make things evident to one another, wouldn't we try to make signs with our hands and head and the rest of the body, the way those who are mute do now?

Hermogenes: How else, Socrates?

423A *Socrates*: I imagine if we wanted to make evident something above or buoyant, we'd lift a hand toward the heavens, imitating the nature itself of the thing, and toward the earth for things that were below or heavy. And if we wanted to make evident a horse, or any of the other animals, that was running, you know that we'd make our bodies and postures as much as possible like those that belong to them.

Hermogenes: It seems to me a necessity that it would be as you say.

Socrates: For I suppose a manifestation of anything could come about
B that way, so it seems, if the body imitates that which one wants to make evident.

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: And when we want to make something evident by voice and tongue and mouth, won't the manifestation that comes from them for each thing be there for us when an imitation connected with whatever that thing is comes about by means of them?

Hermogenes: That seems to me to be a necessity.

Socrates: Therefore it looks like a name is an imitation by a voice of that thing which is imitated, and one who imitates anything with his voice names what he imitates.

Hermogenes: It seems that way to me.

Socrates: By Zeus, though, it doesn't seem to me that it's been said beautifully yet, my friend. **C**

Hermogenes: Why, exactly?

Socrates: Because then we'd be forced to concede that people who imitate sheep and roosters and other animals are naming the things they imitate.

Hermogenes: What you say is true.

Socrates: And does that seem to you to be a beautiful result?

Hermogenes: Not to me. But then what sort of imitation would a name be, Socrates?

Socrates: First of all, as it seems to me, if we were to imitate things the way we imitate them by musical skill, that wouldn't be a name, even if we imitated them then with the voice; and next, it doesn't seem to me we'd be making a name even if we imitated the same things music imitates. What I mean is this: there's sound and shape in things in each case, isn't there, and color in many of them? **D**

Hermogenes: Certainly.

Socrates: Well, it looks like there's not a name when one imitates these, and that the art that has to do with those imitations isn't the art of naming. Those arts are music in the one case and visual art in the other, aren't they?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: And what about this: doesn't it seem to you that each thing also has a being-ness, just as it has a color and the attributes we were just speaking of? First of all, don't color and sound themselves each have a certain being-ness of their own, as well as everything else that can lay claim to this designation of *being*? **E**

Hermogenes: It seems so to me.

Socrates: What about it, then? If someone had the power to imitate this very aspect of each thing, its being-ness, in letters and syllables, would he not make evident what each thing is? Or is that not so?

Hermogenes: Very much so. **424A**

Socrates: And what would you say about someone with this power, the way you said before that one sort of person is skilled in music and another in visual arts? What is this person?

Hermogenes: This one seems to me to be the one we've been inquiring about all along, Socrates; he'd be someone skilled at name-giving.

Socrates: Therefore, if that's true, it looks like what ought to be examined at this point are those names you were asking about, "flux" and "going" and "hindrance," and whether or not they capture

B the being of those things in letters and syllables in such a way as to imitate their being-ness.

Hermogenes: Exactly.

Socrates: Come on, then, and let's see whether these are, after all, the only instances of original names, or whether there are also a lot of others.

Hermogenes: I'd imagine there are also others.

Socrates: Likely so. But what would be the manner of dividing things up on the basis of which the one imitating could start imitating? And seeing as how the imitation of being-ness happens to be in syllables and letters, wouldn't it be most right to divide up *their* **C** elementary constituents first, just as those who take up the subject of the poetic rhythms divide up the properties of the letters first, and then of syllables, and thus proceed to examine the rhythms then but not before?

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: So shouldn't we too likewise divide off the vowels first, and then divide up, according to their forms, the other letters, the consonants, or mutes—for no doubt that's the way the experts in these matters speak of them—and then in turn the ones that aren't vowels but aren't exactly mutes either? And also, among the vowels themselves, whatever forms they have that differ from one another? **D** And when we've divided up the *beings*[68] well in their turn, we need to apply names to all of them, if there are things like elements to which they're all traced back, to see both what they're composed of and whether there are forms among them that they divide up into in the same way there were among the letters. And we need to know, by contemplating all of them beautifully, how to match up each one with its likeness, whether it needs to be matched up one to one or by mixing several together; it's the same way that painters who want to make a likeness sometimes apply purple by itself, and **E** sometimes one of the other pigments, but there are also times when they mix several together, for instance when they're preparing a flesh-colored pigment or something else of that sort—as, I imagine, each particular image seems to require each particular pigment. In exactly that way, we too will apply the letters to the things, one to one to what seems to require it, or several together, making precisely what people call syllables, and in turn putting together **425A** the syllables of which the nouns and verbs are composed. And out of the nouns and verbs again we'll organize at last something great, beautiful, and whole, like the painting in our example from visual art; here it's speech, due to skill at name-giving or rhetoric or whatever art it is. Or to be more exact, it's not *we* who do this:

68 Burnet follows an earlier editor in deleting the words *ta onta*, but doing so makes the grammar slightly easier to construe at the expense of the clear and emphatic meaning of the passage.

I got carried away in saying that. For it was the ancients who put speech together in just the way that it's composed. What *we* have to do, if we're going to know how to look into all these matters in an artful way, is to divide things up in order to see in that way whether or not the original names and the later ones are properly applied; if not, dear Hermogenes, to string them together in any other way would be a trifling thing and off any proper course. **B**

Hermogenes: By Zeus, Socrates, it may be!

Socrates: What then? Do you have confidence in yourself to be able to divide things up that way? I don't in myself.

Hermogenes: Then I'm far short of it.

Socrates: Are we going to give up, then, or do you want us to do whatever is in our power, and if we're able to catch even a little glimpse of these things, shall we give it a try, making a preliminary disclaimer, as we did a little while ago to the gods, that without knowing any part of the truth we were making conjectures about human beings' opinions about them, so too now shall we proceed by saying again, to ourselves, that if there's any need, either for anyone else or for us, to divide these things up, they'd have to be divided in that way, but for now, as the saying goes, we'll just have to give it an effort with the ability we can bring to it? What do you say, does that seem good? **C**

Hermogenes: Very much so; it most emphatically seems good to me.

Socrates: I suppose it must appear ridiculous, Hermogenes, that things could become clear by being imitated in letters and syllables, but it's a necessity all the same. For we have nothing any better than this that we can fall back upon for truth in the original names, unless, after all, you want us to do as tragic poets do when they get stuck over something, and escape it by cranking up gods on mechanical contrivances; we too could get out of our difficulty by talking that way, saying that the gods established the original names and that's why they're right. Is that the most powerful account we can come up with? Or that one that says we took them over from some barbarians and the barbarians are more primitive than we are? Or, as is also the case with the barbarian words, that it's impossible to investigate them on account of their antiquity? These would all be evasions, though very ingenious ones, by someone who doesn't want to give an account of how the original names are rightly applied. And yet anyone who doesn't know what manner of rightness there is in the original names is undoubtedly incapable of knowing that about the later ones either, since the latter, necessarily, can only make anything evident by way of the former, which one knows nothing about. But it's obvious that anyone who claims to be in possession of art about these matters has to have the capacity to give the clearest demonstrations most of all of the original names; otherwise he **D** **E** **426A** **B**

knows very well that he'll be spouting nonsense about the later ones. Or does it seem any different to you?

Hermogenes: Not different in any way whatsoever, Socrates.

Socrates: Well, the observations I've made about the original names seem to me to be presumptuous and laughable. I'll give you a sample of them if you want, but if you can get hold of anything better from anywhere, try to give me a sample too.

Hermogenes: I'll do that. Just be bold and speak.

C *Socrates*: Well first of all, the letter rho appears to me, anyway, to be a sort of tool for every kind of motion.[69] We haven't said why motion has that name but it's obvious that it's meant to be a *tendency*, because we didn't use an eta in the old days but an epsilon. And the beginning of the name is from "kiein"—a foreign name that means *to go*. So if one were to search out the ancient name corresponding to the one in our dialect, it would rightly be "esis," but nowadays, as a result of the foreign "kiein," the change to an **D** eta, and the insertion of a nu, it's called "kinêsis," though it ought to be called "kieinêsis." "Rest" is meant to be a negation of *going*, but by being prettied up it's given the name "stasis." And the letter rho, as I say, seemed to the one who established names to be a beautiful device for someone capturing a likeness of the carrying on of motion; at any rate he uses it for that in many instances. First of all, in "flow" itself and "flux," he imitates their motion **E** by this letter, and then in "quivering" and "running" and also in such verbs as "to strike," "to break," "to shatter," "to crush," "to chop," and "to whirl," he captures all these images mostly by the rho. I imagine he saw that the tongue is least at rest in this letter, and vibrating most, and that appears to me the reason he made full use of it for these things. Then for all rarefied things, which would pass through everything most easily, he used iota. That's **427A** why he imitates "going" and "hurrying" with an iota, just as he has imitated all such things as "shivering," "simmering," "vibrating," and shaking in general by naming them with phi, psi, sigma, and zeta, because they're breathy letters. In fact, whenever he imitates anything like blowing anywhere, the one who established names appears to use such letters in them in virtually every case. Then as for the squeezing of the tongue by delta and the stopping of it **B** by tau, he appears to have regarded them as powers useful for the imitation of "chaining up" and "rest." And noticing that the tongue slides most in lambda, he named "smooth," "slide" itself, "oily," "gluey," and all other such things with that likeness. But where the sliding of the tongue is held back by the power of gamma, he made

69 At the beginning of a word, or when pronounced by itself, rho was always aspirated with a slight whooshing sound, but even within a word it is classed as a "liquid" sound. *Kinêsis* (motion) is equated with *kiein esis* (a tendency to go), and *stasis* (rest) with *a-esis* (not-going).

the imitations "sticky," "sweet," and "gummy." Again, perceiving the internality of the sound of nu, he gave the names "inner" and "innards, making likenesses of the functions of the words with their letters. And he assigned alpha to "large" and eta to "long" because the letters are expansive; and he needed omicron as a sign for "round," and mixed that into its name as the most prominent thing in it. And in the same way, the lawgiver appears to bring the rest of them to the task of making in letters and syllables a sign and name for each of the things there are, and to compose out of them the ones still remaining in imitation of those things themselves. This, Hermogenes, appears to me what's meant to be rightness in names, unless Cratylus here says something different. **C** **D**

Hermogenes: Well really, Socrates, Cratylus often gives me a lot of trouble, as I was saying at the beginning, by claiming there's a rightness in names but saying nothing clear about what it might be, so that I'm powerless to know whether he's talking about these matters so obscurely on any occasion deliberately or because he can't help it. Now, then, Cratylus, in front of Socrates, tell me: is the way Socrates is speaking about names to your liking, or do you have some other way to speak more beautifully? And if you have, say it, so you can either learn from Socrates or teach us both. **E**

Cratylus: What, Hermogenes? Does it seem to you to be an easy thing to learn or teach any matter at all so quickly, much less so vast a matter as this, which seems to me to be the greatest among the greatest.

Hermogenes: Not to me, by Zeus, but the remark of Hesiod appears to me to be beautifully apt, that if one contributes even a little on top of a little, that's a positive step.[70] So if you're able to do even a little something more, don't falter but do Socrates here a good turn—you're a just man—and do me one as well. **428A**

Socrates: And I myself, Cratylus, wouldn't insist on any of the things I've said, in which I was examining what appeared so to me along with Hermogenes; so as far as that's concerned be bold and speak, if you have anything better to say, because I'll accept it. And it certainly wouldn't be a wonder to me if you do have something more beautiful than these things, since it seems to me that you've looked into such matters yourself as well as having learned them from others. So if you say something more beautiful, then enroll me as one of your pupils on rightness of names. **B**

Cratylus: That's right, Socrates; as you say, I have made these matters a concern of mine, and I could possibly make you my pupil. I'm afraid, however, that it's completely the opposite of that, and that in **C**

70 *Works and Days*, line 359.

some sense it's to me that it falls to say to you the words of Achilles, which he spoke to Ajax in the Entreaties.[71] He says

> Ajax, of the race of Zeus, son of Telamon, lord of the people,
> Everything you have said seems spoken after my own heart.

You too, Socrates, seem to me to be making oracular pronouncements that are tolerably well after my own mind, whether you're getting them inspired by Euthyphro, or whether some other Muse has been dwelling in you unnoticed all along.

D *Socrates*: My good Cratylus, I've been wondering myself at my own wisdom all along, and I don't trust it. So it seems to me we ought to examine what I'm saying all over again. For deceiving oneself, by oneself, is the most troublesome of all things; when the deceiver is never even a little distance away but always present, how could that not be a terrifying thing? So it looks like it's necessary to turn back repeatedly to the things said before and try, in the phrase of that poet, to look "forward and backward at once." So now in par-
E ticular, let's see what's been said by us. We're claiming that there is rightness in a name that makes evident what the thing is like; do we claim this is sufficient to say?

Cratylus: To me it seems most emphatically so, Socrates.

Socrates: Therefore names are spoken for the purpose of teaching?

Cratylus: Exactly.

Socrates: And do we claim that this is an art and that there are people who are craftsmen at it?

Cratylus: Exactly.

Socrates: Who?

429A *Cratylus*: The very people you were talking about at the beginning, the lawgivers.

Socrates: And do we claim that this art turns up among human beings in the same way as others, or not? What I mean to say is this: with painters, some are undoubtedly better and others worse, aren't they?

Cratylus: Exactly.

Socrates: And the better ones turn out more beautiful works, their paintings, while the others turn out more ordinary ones? And

71 *Iliad* IX, 644-5. The scene is also called the Embassy; Odysseus, Phoenix, and Ajax are sent to persuade Achilles to return to battle. Odysseus promises him gifts and glory, and makes him even more angry. Phoenix, a surrogate father to him, appeals to his good nature, and persuades him to postpone deciding to leave Troy until at least the next day. Ajax tells the other two they're wasting their breath because Achilles is savage, hard, and pitiless, then makes one last brief appeal to him to respect his fellow soldiers. Apparently, both parts of Ajax's blunt speech hit home with Achilles. The quotation in the next speech of "that poet" is *Iliad* I, 343 and III, 109, used there as an image of wisdom.

likewise with housebuilders: the work of some results in more beautiful houses, and that of others in uglier ones?

Cratylus: Yes.

Socrates: And with lawgivers too, wouldn't some turn out their work as more beautiful, others as more ugly? **B**

Cratylus: That no longer seems so to me.

Socrates: So it doesn't seem to you that some laws are better and others more ordinary?

Cratylus: No indeed.

Socrates: So apparently it also doesn't seem to you that one *name* is better and another worse?

Cratylus: No indeed.

Socrates: Therefore all names are rightly applied?

Cratylus: All those that *are* names, anyway.

Socrates: And what about what was being said a little while ago? Should we claim that Hermogenes here can't have that name applied to him unless something about the race of Hermes belongs to him, or that it does apply, but just not rightly? **C**

Cratylus: It seems to me it doesn't apply at all, Socrates; it just seems to apply, but it *is* the name of someone else, of whom it's also the nature.

Socrates: So when someone claims he is Hermogenes, he's not even saying something false? For maybe this too isn't even possible, to claim this person is Hermogenes if he's not?

Cratylus: How do you mean?

Socrates: That it's not possible at all to say anything false; isn't that the force of your statement? For there are some throngs of people who do say that, my dear Cratylus, now as in ages past. **D**

Cratylus: Yes, Socrates, for how, when someone is saying the thing he's saying, could he not be saying something that *is*? Isn't that what it is to say something false, to say things that are not?

Socrates: Your argument is too ingenious for me at my age, my friend. All the same, though, tell me this much: does it seem to you possible not to be saying something false and yet to assert it? **E**

Cratylus: No, it doesn't seem to me one can assert it either.

Socrates: And not even speak it or address anything by it? For instance, if someone were to greet you in a foreign place, grasp your hand, and say, "Welcome Hermogenes, my friend from Athens, son of Smicrion," would he be saying—or asserting or speaking or addressing—that not to you but to Hermogenes here? Or to no one at all?

Cratylus: To me, Socrates, it seems that these utterances he'd be making are of a different kind.

Socrates: But even that's good enough; would the one making these utterances be uttering something true or something false? Or **430A**

is some of it true and some of it false? Even that would be sufficient.

Cratylus: I'd say such a person was just making noise, that he was producing a meaningless agitation in himself, as if he were agitating some brass pot by banging on it.

Socrates: Come on then, Cratylus, if there's some way we can find common ground; wouldn't you say that a name is one thing and that of which it's the name is another?

Cratylus: I would.

Socrates: And do you agree that the name is an imitation of the
B thing?

Cratylus: That most of all.

Socrates: And you say that paintings too, in a different way, are imitations of certain things?

Cratylus: Yes.

Socrates: Come on then—for it may be that I don't understand what it is that you mean, and you could very well be speaking rightly—is it possible for both these imitations, the paintings and those names, to be assigned and applied to the things they're imitations of, or not?

C *Cratylus*: It is.

Socrates: First, then, consider this: one could refer the image of a man to a man, that of a woman to a woman, and so on with the rest?

Cratylus: Certainly.

Socrates: And also the opposite? One could refer that of a man to a woman and that of a woman to a man?

Cratylus: That too is possible.

Socrates: And are both these ways of assigning them right, or just the former?

Cratylus: Just the former.

Socrates: The way, I presume, that gives to each what is fitting and is like it.

Cratylus: That's how it seems to me.

D *Socrates*: And so that we don't get into a battle of words, since you and I are friends, take my explanation of what I mean. In the case of both kinds of imitations, my colleague, paintings and names, I call that sort of assignment right, and in the case of names, true as well as right; the other sort, that gives and refers something unlike, I call not right, and false when it involves names.

E *Cratylus*: Well, Socrates, it could be that assigning them like that in a way that's not right is possible with paintings, but not with names, and that they're necessarily always right.

Socrates: How do you mean? What differentiates one from the other? Isn't it possible for someone to go up to a man and say, "This is your picture," and show him his image, if that's what it happens

to be, or an image of a woman, if it so happens that it is one? And by showing I mean presenting it to the sense of sight.

Cratylus: Quite so.

Socrates: What about it, then? Isn't it possible to go back up to that same person and say, "This is your name"? A name, presumably, is a image just as a painting is, so that's what I'm talking about. Wouldn't it be possible to say to him, "This is your name," and **431A** after that present, to his sense of hearing this time, an image of him, if that's what it happens to be, saying that he's a man, or, if it so happens, an image of the female of the human species, saying that he's a woman? Doesn't it seem to you that this is possible and sometimes occurs?

Cratylus: I'm willing to go along with you, Socrates; let it be that way.

Socrates: And that's a beautiful thing for you to do, my friend, if it *is* that way, since now there's no need to do battle over it at all. So if an assignment of this sort is possible here too, we want to call **B** one of these speaking the truth and the other saying something false. And if that's the way it is, and it's possible to assign names in a way that's not right and not give fitting ones to each thing, but sometimes ones that are not fitting, it would be possible to do this same thing with verbs as well. And if it's possible to apply verbs and nouns that way, it's a necessity for sentences too, since **C** sentences, presumably, are combinations of these—so I assume. Or how do you describe them, Cratylus?

Cratylus: That way; you seem to me to be putting it beautifully.

Socrates: So if we next liken the original names to drawings, it's possible just as in paintings to render all the appropriate colors and shapes, but also not all of them, but to leave some out, and also to add some that are excessive in number or size; isn't that possible?

Cratylus: It is.

Socrates: And someone who renders them all turns out beautiful drawings and images, but if someone either adds or omits some, he too produces works that are drawings and images, but bad ones?

Cratylus: Yes. **D**

Socrates: And what about someone who imitates the being-ness of things by means of syllables and letters? By the same argument, if he renders everything that's appropriate, won't there be a beautiful image—name, that is—but if on occasion he leaves out or adds a little, an image will come about, won't it, but not a beautiful one? And therefore among names there'll be some that are beautifully turned out but others badly?

Cratylus: Maybe.

Socrates: Maybe, therefore, one craftsman of names will be good but **E** another bad?

Cratylus: Yes.

Socrates: And the name we gave this craftsman was "lawgiver."
Cratylus: Yes.
Socrates: Maybe, therefore, by Zeus, just as in the other arts, there'll be a good lawgiver and a bad one, if those earlier statements are agreed to by us.
Cratylus: That is so, but you see, Socrates, when we assign these letters alpha and beta and each of the letters of the alphabet to names by
432A the art of writing, if we leave out or add or transpose anything, it's not that the name has been written by us but not rightly; instead it hasn't been written at all, but it's immediately a different name if it has any of those things happen to it.
Socrates: It may be that we're not considering the matter beautifully when we look at it that way, Cratylus.
Cratylus: How's that?
Socrates: Maybe those things that necessarily consist of a certain number in order to be or not be what they are would have the property that you're speaking of, just as ten itself, or any other number
B you want, immediately becomes something different if you take anything from or add anything to it; but this sort of rightness does not belong to anything qualitative or to images altogether. It's just the opposite: if something is going to be an image, it's necessary that it not at all render everything such as it is in that of which it's an image. Consider whether I'm making any sense. Would there be two things of a kind, such as Cratylus and an image of Cratylus, if one of the gods not only made a likeness of your color and shape the way painters do, but also made all the inner parts exactly such
C as yours are, and gave them the same softness and warmth, and implanted motion and soul and intelligence in them just like those that belong to you, and in a word, established another of the same sort as everything that you have right next to you? Would there then be Cratylus and an image of Cratylus, or two Cratyluses?
Cratylus: They seem to me to be two Cratyluses, Socrates.
Socrates: So do you see, my friend, that we have to search for another kind of rightness in an image, and in the things we were just
D speaking of as well, and not force it not to *be* an image any more if anything is missing or added? Or don't you notice how far short images are of having the same attributes as those things of which they're images?
Cratylus: I do.
Socrates: At any rate, what would happen to the things of which the names are names at the hands of those names, if they were all their likenesses in every respect, would be ridiculous. For presumably everything would be double, and no one would have any way to tell about either one of them whether it was the thing itself or its name.
Cratylus: It's true, as you say.

Socrates: Then be brave, my noble friend, and allow one name to be applied well and another not, and don't force it to have every letter **E**
in order to be absolutely the same as that of which it's the name, but allow an inappropriate letter to come in too. And if a letter, then also a name in a sentence; and if a name, then also allow a sentence in a discussion to be brought in even if it's not appropriate to the things, and allow the thing to be named and spoken of nonetheless, as long as a general impression of the thing the sentence is about is present in it, as with the names of the letters of the alphabet, if you **433A**
recall what Hermogenes and I were saying a little while ago.

Cratylus: I do recall.

Socrates: Beautiful, then. For when that's present in it, even if doesn't have all the appropriate parts, the thing will still be spoken of, beautifully when it has them all, and badly when it has only a few. So let's allow them to be spoken of, you blessed fellow, so that we won't be like people strolling around the streets of Aegina late at night,[72] and lay ourselves open to the opinion that our way of going about it got us to the things in their truth later than we needed to; **B**
either that or look for some other kind of rightness in a name, and don't agree that a name is something that makes a thing evident in syllables and letters. For if you say both these things, you won't be able to be in harmony with yourself.

Cratylus: Well, you seem to me to be speaking in a balanced way, Socrates, and I adopt your suggestion.

Socrates: Then since these things seem good to us in common, let's consider these next points: do we claim that if a name is going to be applied beautifully, it has to have the appropriate letters?

Cratylus: Yes.

Socrates: And the appropriate ones are those that are like the **C**
things?

Cratylus: Exactly.

Socrates: Therefore, those that are beautifully applied are applied in that way; but if one of them is not established that way, then while, if it's going to be an image at all, most of it would probably be made out of letters that are appropriate and like the thing, it would also have something inappropriate in it, and for that reason it wouldn't be a beautiful name or a beautifully made piece of work. Is that what we're claiming, or something else?

Cratylus: I suppose there's no need to do battle over it, Socrates, but it still doesn't satisfy me to claim something is a name even though it isn't beautifully applied.

Socrates: Is this not satisfying to you , that a name is something that **D**
makes a thing evident?

72 Aegina was a city on an island 17 miles from Athens. Presumably incautious Athenians spending an evening there could miss the last chance to get a boat back until morning.

Cratylus: To me it is.

Socrates: And that among names, some are composed of earlier ones and others are original, does that not seem to you to be beautifully said?

Cratylus: To me it does.

Socrates: But if the original names are going to become things that make anything evident, can you think of any more beautiful
E way for them to come to make that evident other than by making them as much as possible the same sorts of things as the ones they need to make evident? Or does this satisfy you more, the way that Hermogenes and many others talk about it, saying that names are conventional, and make things evident to those who already know them because they're in on the agreement, and that's the rightness of a name, convention, and it makes no difference whether one makes the agreement the way we do now or even the opposite way, to refer to what's now little as big and what's big as little? Which way satisfies you?

434A *Cratylus*: It's a wholly and completely better thing, Socrates, to make evident whatever one makes evident by likeness and not by something random.

Socrates: Beautifully said. And if the name is going to be like the thing, isn't it necessary for the letters of which the orignal names are composed to be of a nature that's like the things? This is what I mean: could one ever compose what we were just talking about, a painting that's like one of the things there are, if there were not
B already present by nature pigments, of which the paintings are composed, that are like those things which the painter's art imitates? Wouldn't it be impossible?

Cratylus: Impossible.

Socrates: And likewise with names, none could ever become like anything, could they, if there were not already present originally those things of which names are composed, that have some likeness to those things of which the names are imitations? And these things of which they have to be composed are letters?

Cratylus: Yes.

Socrates: Then you too must now join in the common endeavor of
C speech which Hermogenes was involved in just now. Come on: does it seem to you it was beautifully said by us that rho has a resemblance to passage, motion, and hardness, or not beautifully?

Cratylus: To me, beautifully.

Socrates: And lambda resembles what's smooth and soft and the things we were just speaking of?

Cratylus: Yes.

Socrates: And you know that the same thing we refer to as "sklêrotês," the Eretrians call "sklêrotêr"?

Cratylus: Certainly.

Socrates: So are rho and sigma both like the same thing, and does the rho at the end make the same thing evident to them that the sigma does to us, or to one or the other of us does the name not make that evident?

Cratylus: It makes it evident to both. **D**

Socrates: Insofar as the rho and sigma happen to be alike, or insofar as they don't?

Cratylus: Insofar as they're alike.

Socrates: And are they alike in every way?

Cratylus: At least with respect to making motion evident, they probably are.

Socrates: And the lambda that's inserted? Doesn't that make the opposite of hardness evident?

Cratylus: Well, probably it's not right to insert it, Socrates, like the letters you were speaking to Hermogenes about just now, taking them out or putting them in where necessary, and you seemed to me right in doing so. Now too one probably ought to say rho instead of lambda.[73]

Socrates: Well said. But what follows? The way we pronounce it now, **E** are we not understanding one another at all when someone says "sklêron," and do you not even know what I mean by it now?

Cratylus: *I* do, just by habit, my very dear friend.

Socrates: But in speaking of habit, do you imagine you're talking about anything different from convention? Or do you mean something else by habit than I do, that when I utter this word I have in mind that meaning, and you recognize that I have that in mind? Isn't that what you mean?

Cratylus: Yes. **435A**

Socrates: So if you recognize that when I utter the word, it becomes something from me that makes that evident to you?

Cratylus: Yes.

Socrates: And it comes from something that's unlike what I have in mind when I utter it, if the lambda is unlike hardness in the case you speak of; and if that's the way it is, what else did you yourself do but make a convention with yourself? Doesn't the kind of rightness the name has for you turn out to be convention, since both like and unlike letters make the meaning evident by falling in by chance with custom and convention? And even if habit is something as different as possible from convention, it would still no longer be a **B** beautiful thing to say that likeness is what makes things evident, but rather habit, since it looks like that makes things evident by what's unlike as well as like. And since we go along with that, Cratylus—for I take your silence as consent—it's no doubt necessary that both convention and habit contribute in some way to

73 Hence the Eretrian word for hardness would become *skrêrotêr*, and it would begin to approach *r-r-r*.

making evident the things we have in mind when we speak. For, most excellent fellow, if you want to go back to numbers, where do you imagine you'll get names that are like each one of the numbers
C to refer to them by, if you don't allow your agreement and convention to have some authority over the rightness of names? Now for my part, I myself am satisfied for names to be like the things as far as that's in their power, but I'm afraid that in truth this affinity of likeness is a tacky sort of thing, to use Hermogenes' word, and that it's necessary also to have recourse to this vulgar thing, convention, for rightness in names. Now probably names would be spoken in the most beautiful possible way when all or as many as possible were used as likenesses, that is, as fittingly appropriate, and the
D opposite would be the ugliest way. But tell me this further thing next: what power do names have for us, and what do we claim they accomplish that's beautiful?

Cratylus: Teaching, it seems to me, Socrates, and this is very simple: he who knows the names also knows the things.

Socrates: Maybe you're saying something like this, Cratylus: that when one knows what the name is like, and it's exactly like the
E thing, he'll also know the thing, since it turns out to be like the name, and the art that deals with all those things that are like one another is, after all, one and the same. It's in this regard that you seem to me to be saying that he who knows the names will also know the things.

Cratylus: You speak the utmost truth.

Socrates: Hold it there; let's see what this way of teaching about the things that are, which you're now speaking of, might be, and whether there's also any other way, even if this one is better, or whether there's no other way besides this. Which do you suppose it is?

436A *Cratylus*: This way, I'd say: there isn't any other at all. This is both the only one and the best.

Socrates: And would this same way also hold for the *discovery* of the things that are, that the one who discovered the names also discovered those things of which they're the names? Or would inquiring and discovering need a different way, while this one is for learning?

Cratylus: Inquiring and discovering most of all need this same way, applied to the same things.

Socrates: Come on, then, Cratylus, and let's think this over; if someone
B who's inquiring about the things follows the names, examining what sort each of them is meant to be, don't you realize that there's no small risk of being deceived?

Cratylus: In what way?

Socrates: It's obvious that when someone first established the names, whatever he considered the things to be like, that's also how he made the names; that's what we claim, isn't it?

Cratylus: Yes.

Socrates: So if he didn't consider rightly, and made them the way he considered them, what do you imagine is going to happen to us when we follow him? Can we do anything else but get deceived?

Cratylus: But that's *not* the way it is, Socrates; it's necessary that the one who established the names established them with knowledge. If that were not the case, as I've been saying all along, they couldn't *be* names. And let this be the surest confirmation to you that the one who established them didn't stumble from the truth: all his names could never be in such harmony otherwise. Or didn't you yourself realize as you were speaking that all the names came by the same route to the same place? **C**

Socrates: My good Cratylus, that's no defense at all. For if the one who established them stumbled over the first name and from then on forced the rest in that direction and compelled them to harmonize with it, there's nothing strange about that. It's the same way sometimes with geometrical proofs, when a small and obscure false step comes in at the beginning and from then on all the remaining following steps, vastly many as they are, are in agreement with one another. So it's necessary in every matter undertaken by every man for there to be much discussion of the source of it and much examination of whether or not the foundation is rightly laid down. When that's been adequately tested, the things that remain have to follow manifestly from that. Notwithstanding that, however, it would be a wonder to me if the names themselves are in fact in harmony with themselves. So let's re-examine the things we went over before. We claim that names signify being-ness to us on the basis that everything is in transition, motion, and flux. Do they seem to you to make evident anything else but that? **D** **E**

Cratylus: That's it, very emphatically so, and they signify that rightly. **437A**

Socrates: So from among them let's first take up again this name "knowledge" and look at how ambiguous it is. It looks like it signifies that it makes our soul *come to a standstill* in the face of things rather than being carried around with them, and that there's more rightness in pronouncing the beginning of it the way we do now rather than inserting an epsilon to make it "epeïstêmê"; the insertion to be made, instead of putting in the epsilon, would be to put

in an iota.[74] Then there's "stable," which is an imitation of a certain
B *taking up a stance* or standing and not of motion. Then "information" signifies more or less the same thing, that it *stops the flow*. And "reliable" absolutely signifies *stopping*. Then too "memory" no doubt conveys to anyone that it's a *staying still* in the soul and not a motion. And if you want, there are "error" and "misfortune"; if one goes strictly by the names, they have the same appearance as "understanding" and "knowledge" and all the other names having to do with things of high stature. Furthermore, "ignorance" and "unrestraint" have pretty much the same appearace as these,
C since one of them, "ignorance," has the appearance of a journey of one who *goes together with a god*, and "unrestraint" absolutely has the appearance of a *following along* with things. And thus what we regard as being names for the worst things would appear to be perfectly similar to those for the most beautiful things. And I imagine one could discover many others as well if one were to take the trouble, from which one might come to imagine, back the other way, that the one who established the names was signifying not that things are in transition and motion but at rest.

D *Cratylus*: But Socrates, you can see that most of them did have that significance.

Socrates: What of it, Cratylus? Are we going to count up names like votes? Is their rightness going to consist in that? Whichever way the greater number of names come to light as pointing, that's going to be the truth?

Cratylus: That's not very plausible.

Socrates: In no way whatsoever, my friend. And let's drop this line[75] of
438A inquiry, and go back again to the point we digressed from. For just now in the preceding discussion, if you recall, you were claiming it was necessary for the one who established names to have established them with knowledge of the things he established them for. Does it still seem that way to you or not?

Cratylus: Still.

74 In 412A, Socrates connected knowledge (*epistêmê*) with following (*epesthai*) along with moving things and keeping pace with them, and inserted an epsilon to make that sound more plausible. He is now suggesting inserting a second iota instead to make it *epiïstêmê*, equated with *epi istêsin* (it makes something come to a standstill in the face of something). *Bebaion* (stable) is equated with *basis* (taking up a stance), *historia* (information) with *histêsi ton roun* (it stops the flow), *piston* (reliable) with *histan* (stopping), *mnêmê* (memory) with *monê* (standing still), *amathia* (ignorance) with *hama theô iôn* (one who goes together with a god), and *akolasia* (unrestraint) with *akolouthia* (following along). *Hamartia* (error) and *sumphora* (misfortune) are unexplained, but may be intended to be taken as equivalent to *hamartê ienai* (going together) and *sumpheresthai* (moving together).

75 The passage occupying the E section of Stephanus p. 437 is rejected as inauthentic by modern editors.

Socrates: And you include the one who established the original names in your claim that he established them with knowledge.

Cratylus: With knowledge.

Socrates: What sort of names would *he* have learned or discovered the *things* from, if the original ones had not yet been applied, when we're also claiming that learning or discovering the things is impossible by any other means than being taught their names or finding out for ourselves what those names were? **B**

Cratylus: You seem to me to have a point there, Socrates.

Socrates: So in what way are we to claim they established them with knowledge or were lawgivers before any name at all had been applied for them to know, if there's no way to learn the things except from the names?

Cratylus: I suppose the truest account of these matters, Socrates, would be that there was some power greater than human that established the original names for things, and hence it's necessary for them to be right. **C**

Socrates: Then you're supposing that the one himself who established names, who was some divinity or god, established them in conflict with himself? Or does it seem to you there was nothing in what we were just saying?

Cratylus: But one group of them *weren't* names.

Socrates: Which group, most excellent fellow, the ones leading toward rest or the ones leading toward motion? For presumably, on the basis of what was just said, that's not going to be decided by their number.

Cratylus: That would surely not be just, Socrates. **D**

Socrates: Then since the names are divided into factions, with one group of them declaring that *they*'re like the truth and the other group that *they* are, what other means are we going to use to decide? What are we to go back to? Presumably not to other names different from these anyway, since there aren't any. It's obvious that something else besides names has to be sought, that will make apparent to us without names which of these two versions is the true one, by indicating, obviously, the truth about *beings*.

Cratylus: It seems that way to me. **E**

Socrates: Therefore, Cratylus, if this is the way things are, it looks like it *is* within our power to learn about the beings without using names.

Cratylus: It appears so.

Socrates: So what other means is there by which you could still expect to learn about them? Could there be any other than the one that is the likely and most just means, namely by learning them through one another, if they are akin in any way, and through themselves directly? For presumably anything other than they and unlike them would signify something other and unlike and not them.

Cratylus: You appear to me to be speaking the truth.

439A *Socrates*: Hold it right there, by Zeus! Haven't we repeatedly agreed that names that are rightly applied are like those things to which they're applied as names, and that they're images of the things?

Cratylus: Yes.

Socrates: So no matter how much it's possible to learn about things through names, if it's also possible to learn about them through themselves, which of the two ways of learning would be more beautiful and clearer? To learn from the image whether it itself is a beautifully made image, as well as the truth of which it was the

B image? Or to learn from the truth both it itself and whether the image of it was fittingly produced?

Cratylus: From the truth; that seems to me to be a necessity.

Socrates: Now to discern in what way one ought to learn and discover the beings is probably too great an undertaking for you and me, but it's enough to be content with for us to have agreed on this: that they themselves are to be learned and inquired after not from names but from themselves much rather than from names.

Cratylus: It appears so, Socrates.

Socrates: Then let's consider this one thing more, so that the fact that

C these many names tend in the same direction doesn't deceive us, if those who established them actually did so thinking that all things are constantly in transition and flux—for that's the way they appear to me myself to have been thinking—if on the other hand it so happens that's not the way things are, but these people are themselves being whirled around as if they'd fallen into a whirlpool, dragging us after them and throwing us in too. For consider, Cratylus, you wonderful fellow, a dream I often have. Do we claim there is a beautiful itself, a good itself, and the same for each one

D of the beings, or not?

Cratylus: It seems so to me, Socrates.

Socrates: So let's consider that very thing, not some face that might be beautiful, or anything like that, the things that all seem to be in flux, but the beautiful itself: don't we claim *that* is always the sort of thing it is?

Cratylus: Necessarily.

Socrates: But if it's constantly departing from itself, is it possible to refer to it rightly by saying first it's that and then it's like this, or is it necessarily, right at the time we're speaking, becoming something else and getting away from itself and no longer being the way it was?

Cratylus: Necessarily.

E *Socrates*: So how could that which is never in the same state be anything? For if it ever were in the same state, it's obvious that for that time at least it's not changing at all; and if it's *always* in the same

state and is the same thing, how could that thing change or move without losing the look[76] it had?

Cratylus: There's no way.

Socrates: But then it couldn't even be recognized by anyone. For at the very time the one who would recognize it came upon it, it would be becoming something else and of a different kind, so that what sort of thing it is and what state it's in could no longer be recognized. Certainly there's no recognition that recognizes what it recognizes when it's in no state at all. **440A**

Cratylus: It is as you say.

Socrates: But it's not even plausible, Cratylus, to claim there is recognition if everything is undergoing change and nothing stays the same. For if that very thing, recognition, is not undergoing change, it would be staying the same and recognition would always be recognition. But if even the form itself of recognition were undergoing change, then at the time it was in transition to another form of recognition there would be no recognition, and if it's always undergoing change, there would always be no recognition; and by this argument there could be neither anyone to recognize nor anything to be recognized. But if there always *is* someone to recognize and there *is* something to be recognized, and there *is* the beautiful, and there *is* the good, and there *is* each one of the beings, these things that we're now speaking of don't appear to me to have any likeness at all to flux or motion. Now whether these matters are this way, or the other way, as those surrounding Heracleitus, and lots of other people, assert, would be, I fear, no easy thing to investigate, but no human being who has any sense would put himself and his soul at the mercy of names to provide for his well-being, trusting in them and in those who established them enough to insist that he knows anything and to pass judgment on himself and on beings that there's no soundness in any of them, but everything drips like a piece of pottery, and literally imagine that things are in the same condition as people suffering from runny noses, with all things afflicted by flux and running sores. Now maybe that's exactly how it is, Cratylus, and maybe it's not. So one should examine the matter courageously and well and not accept anything easily—since you're still young and in your prime—and once you've examined it, if you find the answer, share it with me too. **B** **C** **D**

Cratylus: I'll do just that. But you can be quite sure, Socrates, that even now I'm not in an unreflecting state, and that it appears to me upon reflection and after taking pains that things are much more that way that Heracleitus says. **E**

76 See note to 389B.

Socrates: Well then, my comrade, you'll teach me that some other time, when you get back. But for now, make the journey into the country that you've prepared for, and Hermogenes here will start you on your way.

Cratylus: That will be done, Socrates; but you too should try to ponder these matters still more.

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Perhaps more than any other dialogue, the *Cratylus* has been in need of retranslation. Yet because it is a dialogue about words that is also replete with plays on words, with pretended etymologies, and perhaps with more comedy than any other dialogue, translating it is a daunting task. There is no one better suited for this task than Joe Sachs. His translations of Greek philosophical classics are widely acclaimed both for their truthfulness to the original Greek text and for their sensitivity to every nuance of the text. Sachs's translation of the *Cratylus* is a rare achievement and no doubt will do much to restore to this dialogue its rightful status as one of the major Platonic dialogues.

— John Sallis, *Boston College*

Sachs' introductory discussion of sophistry and philosophy in Plato is the best I know of and highly recommended for the serious student of philosophy.

— Burt Hopkins, *Seattle University*

Joe Sachs taught for thirty years at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. He has translated Aristotle's *Physics, Metaphysics* and *On the Soul* and, for the Focus Philosophical Library, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, Plato's *Theaetetus, Republic* and the *Gorgias*.

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